

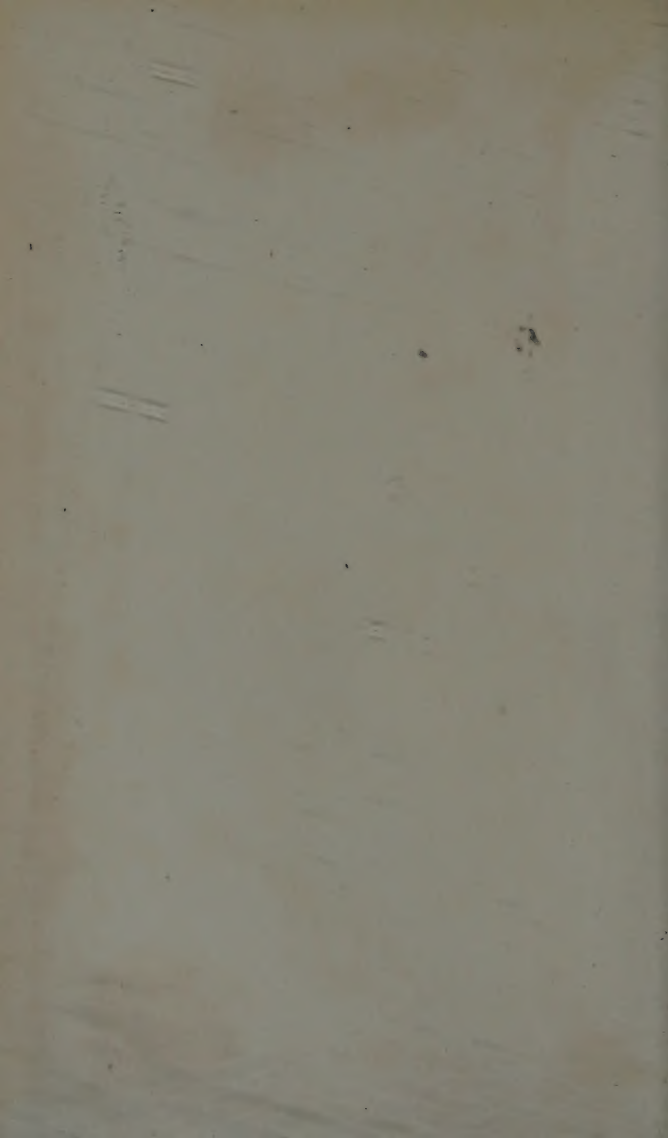
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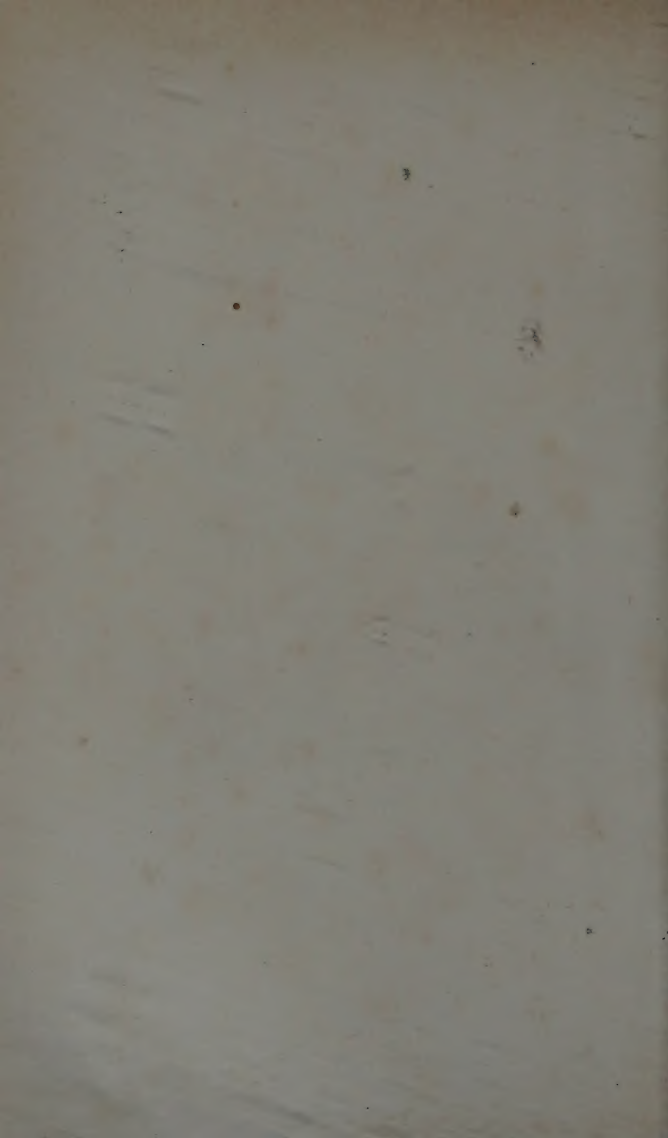
Manchester Grammar  
School





Golden Treasury Series

POEMS OF SHELLEY



POEMS  
OF  
SHELLEY

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY  
STOPFORD A. BROOKE



FIELD PLACE—SHELLEY'S BIRTH-PLACE

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
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I.

AH, DID YOU ONCE SEE SHELLEY PLAIN,  
AND DID HE STOP AND SPEAK TO YOU,  
AND DID YOU SPEAK TO HIM AGAIN?  
HOW STRANGE IT SEEMS, AND NEW!

II.

BUT YOU WERE LIVING BEFORE THAT,  
AND ALSO YOU ARE LIVING AFTER;  
AND THE MEMORY I STARTED AT—  
MY STARTING MOVES YOUR LAUGHTER!

III.

I CROSSED A MOOR, WITH A NAME OF ITS OWN,  
AND A CERTAIN USE IN THE WORLD, NO DOUBT,  
YET A HAND'S-BREADTH OF IT SHINES ALONE  
'MID THE BLANK MILES ROUND ABOUT:

IV.

FOR THERE I PICKED UP ON THE HEATHER,  
AND THERE I PUT INSIDE MY BREAST,  
A MOULTED FEATHER, AN EAGLE FEATHER!  
WELL, I FORGET THE REST.

ROBERT BROWNING



## P R E F A C E.

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SHELLEY, from whose poetry this book of Selections is made, can only, like all other poets, be judged justly, or fitly loved, when everything he wished to be published has been carefully studied. We can no more comprehend him in the right way by reading only his finest poems, supposing we could choose them, than we can receive a true impression of the character of the scenery of a country by visiting a selection of its most beautiful places. Through his weakness we know part of his strength ; nor is it only for his power we love him. This necessity of reading all a poet's work, if we wish to know him truly, or to receive from him his special gift of pleasure, is the main objection to *Selections* ; but its weight is lessened when the intention of a book of this kind is not to represent Shelley fully, but to present, in a brief compass, enough of his poetry to induce those who are ignorant of it to read the whole. That is the only valid reason and excuse for Selections from a poet, and it is the object of this book. If the excuse be accepted, we may say that Shelley is more open to selection

than many of the other poets. His whole work is short, and a great deal of it can be included in a small book. It is especially lyrical, and lyrics are the best material for selections. Some, too, of the longer poems, such as *Alastor* and *Adonais*, in which we can study his steadier and more ambitious effort, are brief enough to be inserted entire, and they break the lyrics pleasantly, and offer a more varied enjoyment to the reader. There is also one spirit in Shelley's work which fills and brings into unity all his poems. It is the spirit of youth. We are not troubled in reading these Selections, by such a change in the whole nature of the poet as age made in Wordsworth. Owing to this unity of spirit, I have been able to place together, without fear of their jarring with one another, poems written at different periods of Shelley's life on the same or kindred themes. To group such poems together is the method followed in this book, and its fitness seems to be supported by the fact that Shelley, being very fond of his ideas, and also of the forms he gave them, repeated them continually. The impression made by one poem is therefore strengthened by another on the same subject. Shelley is his own best illustrator.

When *Selections* from any poet appear rapidly, it may be said that he has taken his place, that time and its verdict have distinguished him in his own country. And Shelley is now at home with us, and his praise becomes greater day by day. Some of that



praise, especially when it exalts him, without distinctiveness of criticism, above his brother poets, seems undeserved, but there is no longer any doubt, among those worthy to judge, that Shelley has assumed his own separate throne among the greater poets of England.

It is then somewhat strange to look back nearly sixty years, and to think that when Shelley died, scarcely fifty people cared to read his poetry, and even these did not understand it. Seven years after his death opinion began to change. He had so far influenced the young men of Cambridge, that its Union sent a deputation in November 1829 to the Oxford Union, to maintain Shelley's superiority over Byron. "At that time," said Lord Houghton—speaking in 1866—"we, the Cambridge undergraduates, were all very full of Mr Shelley. We had printed his *Adonais* in 1829 for the first time in England, and a friend of ours suggested that, as he had been expelled from Oxford, and very badly treated in that University, it would be a grand thing for us to defend him there." The young men, Arthur Hallam, Monckton Milnes, and Sunderland, were received by Gladstone, Francis Doyle, and Milnes Gaskell. Wilberforce of Oriel was in the Chair. Sir Francis Doyle, (Christ Church) moved that Shelley was a greater poet than Lord Byron. He was supported by the three Cambridge men, and by Mr. Oldham of Oriel. The negative was defended by Mr. Manning; and on a division Byron was declared the greater poet by a majority of fifty-seven. This inter-

esting story proves that some young men at Oxford and Cambridge were now awakened to Shelley's genius. They felt and loved him as the most ideal of the poets, and year by year he has increased the number of those who give him that special place and honour.

About 1832 his power over the minds of men increased. At that time fresh political and theological elements began to excite England, and then the other side of Shelley's work began to tell. The poems he had written as the prophet of liberty, equality, fraternity, and a Golden Age, were eagerly read by the more intelligent among the working classes, and by many who felt that the ideas of the French Revolution were again arising into activity after their winter sleep. It is a part of his work which still continues to do good.

Again, within the last few years, the sad, regretful, unsatisfied, self-considering, indefinite elements in the mind of educated English society have found food and expression in a certain number of Shelley's poems, and this has increased the extent of his influence. That which has been called the "lyrical cry" belongs now to a whole section of society, and Shelley often echoes its regret and indefiniteness with great beauty.

Moreover, a great number of persons who care for Nature as Art cares for her, that is, as alive and not dead, being revolted by the materialistic aspect in which some scientific theories now present her, have

turned with new pleasure to the spiritual representations given of her by such poets as Wordsworth and Shelley. That also has added a fresh impulse to the study of Shelley.

It may also be said that the forms, and especially the ideal forms of passionate love, have been, of late, more minutely dwelt on in poetry, and with greater curiosity, than they have been since the Elizabethan period. It is natural, then, that a poet like Shelley, who made ideal love his study, and the subject of so much of his work, should now receive and claim greater attention.

Shelley, reflecting and embodying these various phases, is then a much more comprehensive poet than the common judgment supposes. And he is all the more comprehensive because his nature and his work were twofold. The first thing to say of him is, that he lived in two worlds, thought in two worlds, and in both of these did work which was at once varied and distinct. One was the world of Mankind and its hopes, the other was the world of his own heart.

His poetic life was an alternate changing from one of these worlds to the other. He passed from poetry written for the sake of mankind, to poetry written for his own sake and to express himself; from the Shelley who was inspired by moral aims and wrote in the hope of a regeneration of the world, to that other Shelley who, inspired only by his own ideas and regrets, wrote without any ethical end,

and absolutely apart from humanity. The passionate lover of man crosses over the stage, singing of mankind, and disappears. The passionate poet succeeds, singing of himself, and disappears in turn. The interchange continues, but both the figures are the same man.

Shelley began as the prophet of the ideas of the French Revolution. *Queen Mab*, written with the enthusiasm of a youth for the overthrow of the evils that he thought oppressed mankind, and in hope of its deliverance into a world of love and peace, is not, as a poem, so "absolutely worthless" as he imagined it to be. The verse is musical; there are two direct pictures of nature, both of the sky; the journey through the stars has some of the imaginative power which realised the flight of Asia and the Hours in the *Prometheus*, but all the polemical part is very prosaic. It is like a sermon in verse, and it has just the poetical quality we expect in a sermon. The latter portion is naturally the best. The most remarkable element *Queen Mab* possesses is didactic force. But, owing to its uncultivated rhetoric, that force is likely to tell most on very young persons, and on uneducated but intelligent working men, who may sympathise with its opinions. The poem had such an influence, and that influence was widely extended.

Two years later, in 1815, all was changed. The circumstances of his life, illness, expectation of death, made him lose, in losing all vigour and joy, his in-

terest in man, and *Alastor*, his next long poem, is entirely occupied with his own solitary thought and life. The preface he wrote explains the meaning of the poem, and, contrasted with the poem, reveals that double nature in Shelley of which I write. He repudiates in it, with all the sternness of a moralist, yet with self-pity, the life described in *Alastor*; and the lines with which he closes the poem itself—"It is a woe too deep for tears," etc., are a cry of sorrow and reproach against one who desired to work for man, but who wasted life in pursuit of that unattainable beauty his soul could dream of, but not realize.

Of all Shelley's longer poems, *Alastor* leaves on the general reader the easiest impression of an artistic whole. The subject is one, and never varies from itself: it is closely clung to from beginning to end, and is deeply felt throughout. The poetry and its art, both imaginative and technical, are of course less great than they became in after work, but so far as unity of conception and steadiness of expression and form are concerned, even *Adonais* is less artistic than *Alastor*. Shelley's personality absorbs the poem. The extreme ideality of the treatment alone relieves the intensity of this personal revelation, and makes it not too overwhelming to give pleasure. The natural descriptions prove how deeply Shelley had felt some of the larger aspects of Nature, and the melody of their verse is at times like the harmonies we seem to hear among waters and woods; but Nature in this poem

is never described for herself alone, never for pure joy in her. She is made to reflect the thoughts and passion of the wandering poet until the very last, when his life and that of the moon ebb away together. This is deliberately done, and nowhere in a finer way than in the description of the long walk down the glen. We follow step by step the interpenetration of the poet's dying soul and of the various changes of the scene. As the brook flows to the precipice, so does his life; as the valley alters its landscape, so does the landscape in his heart. The skill and intensity with which this is wrought out is the cause of the fascination that passage has for all who read it.

In the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and to *Mont Blanc*, written after *Alastor*, Shelley, though writing only as the artist of his own thought, has recovered some of his hopes for Man. He tries to connect his worship of Beauty with the redemption of the race; he speaks of the Power hidden in the great mountain to "repeal large codes of fraud and woe." His Continental journey had brought him new health, and his life, new happiness, and with them came back the old longing and the old interest to play his part in the movement of the world. The result was the *Revolt of Islam*. Its genesis and its aim are explained in the preface with which he accompanied the poem. It seemed to Shelley that the age of despair that followed the end of the French Revolution was over,

and that now, when the reaction from that trance of failure had begun, the time had arrived for him to speak. In that belief he composed this poem. It strove to kindle afresh the flame of liberty, but it had no effect on the exhausted Englishmen of 1818. Nor, as poetry, did it deserve to have a great effect. It is the most unbalanced of all his works. The interest is human, but it is too frequently taken out of the world of actual human life to awaken practical emotion. Were the scenery of the poem all ideal, or all real, we should not be so troubled while we read. Were the poem supremely ethical or supremely emotional, had it any unity at all, it might keep its power over us. But it has no unity, not even in feeling. Its emotion is unequal; we are continually changing the atmosphere, and are overchilled or overheated. There is no artistic fusion of the poetry which aims at giving a high pleasure with that which aims at awakening man to his duties. That fusion was made in the *Prometheus Unbound*, but here it was not made.

And now another of these changes took place. Shelley fell ill again, the threatened loss of his children preyed upon him, and he left England for ever in 1818. He lost again for a time his enthusiasm for man, and the characteristic of the work of this year is sadness deepening into misery. With very few exceptions the poems are personal. One, however, differs from all that preceded it. *Julian and Maddalo*, composed at the end of the year, is personal,

but still not so much so as to prevent Shelley from painting, with a firm hand, another character than his own. It is the first instance of that power of losing himself in the creation of distinct personages which enabled him to write the drama of the *Cenci*. *Julian and Maddalo* has unity, and the materials are carefully woven together. The style is subdued to a quiet level, and the imagination, which ran riot in the *Revolt of Islam*, is curbed to do its work, and only its special work, by the will of the poet. Reading it, we should predict that if again the enthusiasm for man should awaken in Shelley's heart, the work he would do on the subject would be more worthy of his power. It did awaken, and in how different a form it came! It was no longer hampered by his notion that he must directly attack evil. It rose at once and easily, taking with it all the subjects of the *Revolt of Islam*, into the region of pure art, and there, in the world of passion and beauty and fire, he wrote the *Prometheus Unbound*. That poem is the marriage of Shelley's double nature, the fusion for creative work of the lover of man and the poet. He reaches in it that culminating point at which the thinker on man gives his best-loved materials to the artist, and the artist breathes into them life and beauty.

The same vivid interest in humanity was then made special in the *Cenci*, a tragedy wrought out with so much temperance of imagination, directness of emotion, and closeness of thought, that it is the strangest



contrast to the *Prometheus*. The range of power implied in the production of these two dramas within twelve months, each so great, and so unlike, is rarely to be paralleled among the poets below those of the highest order. It is all the more wonderful when we think that about the same time such poems were also created as the *Sensitive Plant*, the *Skylark*, the *Cloud*, *Arethusa*, and the *Ode to the West Wind*. The last alone is enough to place Shelley apart from the other lyrical poets of England. In it, as in the *Prometheus*, and still more splendidly, all his powers and his poetic subjects are wrought into a whole. The emotion awakened by the approaching storm sets on fire other sleeping emotions in his heart, and the whole of his being bursts into flame around the first emotion. This is the manner of the genesis of all the noblest lyrics. He passes from magnificent union of himself with Nature and magnificent realisation of her storm and peace, to equally great self-description, and then mingles all nature and all himself together, that he may sing of the restoration of mankind. There is no song in the whole of our literature more passionate, more penetrative, more full of the force by which the idea and its form are united into one creation.

This time, during which Shelley's twofold being was married for creative work, did not last long. The two elements always tended to separate, and now the special Shelley element, which fled from man into

the recesses of his own heart, or communed with the ideal Nature which he made for himself out of the apparent world, began to absorb him, and finally drove out the other.

At the beginning of this reaction he was still gay, often bright; and the *Letter to Maria Gisborne* is one of the rare poems in which Shelley is at peace. An air of home and happiness flows through its familiar and melodious verse. *The Witch of Atlas* also belongs to this time; a poem in which he sent his imagination out, like a child into a meadow, without any aim save to enjoy itself. Now and again Shelley himself, as it were from a distance, alters or arranges the manner of the sport, as if with some intention, but never so much as to spoil the natural wildness of the Imagination's play. Enough is done to suggest that there may be a meaning in it all, but not enough to tell that meaning. "I mean nothing," Shelley would have said; "I did not write the poem. My imagination made it of her own accord." Nor was he so self-absorbed at first as wholly to neglect the cause of man. The *Ode to Liberty*, the *Ode to Naples*, belong to this summer and autumn of 1820.

We pass into the isolated poet with the *Sensitive Plant*, the companionless flower; and from this time forth the old Shelley, who loved Mankind, is dead. The only exception is the choral drama of *Hellas*, written in a transient enthusiasm for the cause of Greece. "I try to be what I might have been,"

he says, "but am not successful. It was written without much care, and in one of those few moments of enthusiasm which now seldom visit me, and which make me pay dear for their visits." Two poems, however, preceded *Hellas*; *Epipsychidion* and *Adonais*. Both are written by the lonely artist; nor is there any trace in them of the Shelley who prophesied for Man. Of *Epipsychidion* I have spoken in the notes of this book. The ideal passion, in which it originated, hid him in the light of thought, far away from humanity, and he never quite got back again.

*Adonais*, awakened in him not only by his sympathy with Keats, but also by the resemblance of the fate of Keats to his own, is almost as much concerned with Shelley as with its subject. There is nothing in English poetry so steeped in passionate personality as the description of himself in stanzas xxxi-iv. It is almost too close, too unveiled, too intense to have been written. The only other poet—for Byron's self-description is written with a view to effect—who has approached the wild self-sorrow of it, is Cowper, and he uses the same simile of the stricken stag. The poem is, as Shelley said, "a highly wrought piece of art." Its abstract spirituality, and its philosophy, remove it from the ordinary apprehension, and are the cause why it is less read than *Alastor*. But, in truth, Shelley himself, and the scenery and personages he creates in this abstract realm, are more real in this poem than in others which have to

do with the actual world. It suited him to write about a spirit, and he wrote as he were himself a spirit. The Dreams which hover round *Adonais*, the Splendours and Glooms, Morning with the tears in her hair, Spring wild with grief, Echo singing in the hills, Urania flying to mourn beside the bier—Shelley has succeeded in giving them, all being. While we read, we believe in the reality of this world as we believe in our dreams while we dream. The power of doing this is unique, and is due not only to imagination at its height, but also to keenness of abstract intellect. His grip of these impalpable personages is quite certain. He creates them, and then he sees and hears them. Owing to this the conduct of the poem is clear. The unremitting beauty of the lines so engages attention as at first to forbid an analysis of the arrangement, but when that analysis is made, the pleasure *Adonais* gives is not disturbed, but doubled. And how passionate it is throughout, more passionate than most of his love poems! It is unceasingly strange, and the strangeness adds, from outside, to the charm of Shelley's poetry, to find him writing with a far greater intensity of feeling about the sorrow of Urania and the Dreams, about the Spirit of Love in the Universe, about Keats in the spiritual world, and about his own wearied and solitary heart, than he ever writes about men or women, about human love, or about the personal suffering of others.

A new element of isolation, that created by a passion which circumstances forbade him to pursue, separated him now, at the close of his life, still more from Mankind, and in that temper he died. But there are some proofs, to which I shall afterwards draw attention, that he would, as before, have passed out of this lonely inner life, and found himself again in sympathy with the external. Had he lived, he would have once more appeared as the Singer of Man, and in the cause of men. But the swift wind and the mysterious sea, the things he loved, slew their lover—a common fate—and we hear no more his singing. His work was done, and its twofold nature may well be imaged by the Sea that received into its uninhabited breast his unaccompanied spirit; for, while its central depths know only solitude, over its surface are always passing to and fro the life and fortunes of humanity.

But the sea gave up its dead, and all of Shelley's body that was rescued from flood and fire lies now where the rise of the ground ends, in a dark nook of the Aurelian wall. So deep is that resting-place in shadow that the violets blossom later there than on "the slope of green access" where, seen from Shelley's grave, the flowers grow over the dust of Adonais. We may be glad that both were buried in Italy rather than in England, for, though no Italian could have written their poetry, yet it was, —in all things else different,—of that spirit which

Italy awakens in Englishmen who love her, rather than of the purely English spirit. The Italian air, the sentiment of Italy, fled and dreamed through their poems, but most through those of Shelley. It was but fitting, then, that Shelley, whose fame was England's, should be buried in the city which is the heart of Italy. But he was born far away from this peaceful and melancholy spot, and grew up to manhood under the grey skies of England, until its Universities, its Church, its Society, its Law and its dominant policy became inhospitable to him, nay, even his own father cast him out. They all had, in the opinion of sober men of that time, good cause to make him a stranger, for he attacked them all, and it would be neither wise or true, nor grateful to Shelley himself, were he to be put forward as a genius unjustly treated, or as one who deserved or asked for pity. Those who separate themselves from society, and war against its dearest maxims, if they are as resolute in their choice, and as firm in their beliefs as Shelley, count the cost, and do not or rarely complain when the penalty is exacted. He was exiled, and it was no wonder. The opinion of the world did not trouble him, nor was that a wonder. But as this exile is the most prominent fact of his life, its influence is sure to underlie his work. The second question that any one who writes of Shelley has to ask, is, How did this exile from the Education, Law, Religion, and Society of his country, and from the soil of his country itself, affect his poetry?

It had a very great influence, partly for good and partly for evil. The good it did is clear. It deepened his individuality and the power which issued from that source. It set him free from the poetic conventions to which his art might have yielded too much obedience in England—a good which the obscurity of Keats also procured for him—it prevented him from being worried too much by the blind worms of criticism, it enabled him to develop himself more freely, and it placed him in contact with a natural scenery, fuller and sunnier than he could ever have had in England, in which his love of beauty found so happy and healthy a food that it came to perfect flower. In Italy also, where impulse even more than reason urges intelligence and inspires genius, lyrical poetry, which is born of impulse, is more natural and easy, though not better, than elsewhere, and the very inmost spirit of Shelley, deeper than his metaphysics or his love of Man and inspiring both, deeper even than any personal passion, was the lyrical longing of his whole body, soul, and spirit—"O that I had wings like a dove ; then would I flee away, and be at rest."

But the good this exile did his art was largely counterbalanced by its harm. Shelley's individuality, unchecked by that of others, grew too great, and tended not only to isolate him from men, but to prevent his art from becoming conversant enough with human life. The absence of critical sympathy of a

good kind, such as that which flows from one poet to another in a large society, left some of his work, as it left some of Keats', more formless, more intemperate, more impalpable, more careless, more apart from the realities of life, than it ought to have been in the most poetical of poets since the days of Elizabeth. Even in his lyric work, the impassioned impulse would have failed less often to fulfil its form perfectly; there would not have been so many fragments thrown aside for want of patience or power to complete them, had he been less personal, less subject to individual freakishness, more subject to the unexpressed criticism which floats, as it were, in the air of a large literary society, and constrains the art of the poet into measured act and power. And as to Nature, we should perhaps have had, with his genius, a much wider and less ideal representation of her, had he not been so enthralled by the vastness and homelessness of Swiss, and by the ideality of Italian scenery. Even when he did write in England itself, the recollected love of Switzerland and the Rhine mingled with the impressions he received from the Thames, and produced a scenery, as in certain passages in *Alastor* and the *Revolt of Islam*, which is not directly studied from anything in heaven or earth. It is none the worse for that, but it is not Nature, it is Art.

These are general considerations, but there were some more particular results, partly good and partly



evil, of this separation of Shelley from the ordinary religious and political views of English society.

A good deal of his poetry became polemical, and polemical, like satiric poetry, is apart from pure art. It attacks evil directly, and the poet, his mind being then fixed not on the beautiful but on the base, writes prosaically. Or it embodies a creed in verse, and, being concerned with doctrine, becomes dull. In both cases the poet misses, as Shelley did, that inspiration of the beautiful which arises from the seeing of truth, not from the seeing of a lie; from the love of true ideas, not from their intellectual perception. The verses, for example, in the *Ode to Liberty*, which directly attack kingcraft and priestcraft, however gladly one would see their sentiments in prose, are inferior as poetry to all the rest; and it is the same throughout all Shelley's poetry of direct attack on evil. This polemical element in the *Revolt of Islam*, and the endeavour to lay down in it his revolutionary creed, are additional causes of the wastes of prosaic poetry which make it so unreadable. The very splendour and passion of the passages devoted to Nature and Love contrast so sharply, like burning spaces of sunlight on a grey sea, with the wearisome whole, that they lose half their value, and disturb, like so much else, the unity of the poem. The same things seem true of *Rosalind and Helen*, and of those political poems which are direct attacks on abuses in England. On the other hand, when Shelley wrote on these evils in-

directly, inspired by the opposing truths, concerned with their beauty, and borne upwards by delight in them, his work entered the realm of art, and his poetry became magnificent. There is no finer example of this than *Prometheus Unbound*. The subject is at root the same as that of the Revolt of Islam, the things opposed are the same, the doctrine is the same, but the whole method of approaching his idea and fulfilling its form is changed, and all the questions are brought into that artistic representation which stirs around them inspiring and enduring emotion.

The good Shelley did in this way was very great. At a time when England, still influenced by its abhorrence of the Reign of Terror, by its fear of France and Napoleon, was most dead to the political ideas that had taken form in 1789, Shelley gave voice, through art, to these ideas, and encouraged that hope of a golden age which, however vague, does so much for human progress. He threw around these things imaginative emotion, and added all its power to the struggle for freedom.

Still greater is the unrecognised work he did in the same way for theology in England. That theology was no better than all theology had become under the influence of the imperial and feudal ideas of Europe. Its notion of God, and of man in relation to God, partly Hebraic, and therefore sacerdotal and sacrificial, partly deeply dyed with asceticism and

other elements derived from the Oriental notion of the evil of matter, was further modified by the political views of the Roman Empire, transferred to God by the Roman Church. And when the universal ideas regarding mankind, and a return to nature, were put forth by France, they clashed instantly with this limited, sacerdotal, ascetic, aristocratic, and feudal theology. The sovereign right of God, because He was omnipotent, to destroy the greater part of His subjects, the right of a caste of priests to impose their doctrines on all, and to exile from religion all who did not agree with them; the view that whatever God was represented to do was right, though it might directly contradict the nature, the conscience, and the heart of Man; these, and other related views had been brought to the bar of humanity, and condemned from the intellectual point of view by a whole tribe of thinkers. But if a veteran theology is to be disarmed and slain, it needs to be brought not only into the arena of thought and argument, but into the arena of poetic emotion. A great part of that latter work was done in England by Shelley. He indirectly made, as time went on, an ever-increasing number of men feel that the will of God could not be in antagonism to the universal ideas concerning Man, that His character could not be in contradiction to the moralities of the heart, and that the destiny He willed for mankind must be as universal and as just and loving as Himself. There are more clergymen, and more religious lay-

men than we imagine, who trace to the emotion Shelley awakened in them when they were young, their wider and better views of God. Many men, also, who were quite careless of religion, yet cared for poetry, were led, and are still led, to think concerning the grounds of a true worship, by the moral enthusiasm which Shelley applied to theology. He made emotion burn around it, and we owe to him a great deal of its nearer advance to the teaching of Christ. But we owe it, not to those portions of his poetry which denounced what was false and evil, but to those which represented and revealed, in delight in its beauty, what was good and true. Had he remained in England, I do not think he would have worked on this matter in the ideal way of *Prometheus Unbound*, because continual contact with the reigning theology would have driven his easily wrought anger into direct violence. In Italy, in exile, it was different. The polemical temper in which he wrote the *Revolt of Islam* changed into the poetical temper in which he wrote *Prometheus Unbound*.

Connected with this, but not with his exile, is the question, in what way his belief as to a Source of Nature influenced his art. He was not an atheist or a materialist. If he may be said to have occupied any theoretical position, it was that of an Ideal Pantheist; the position which, with regard to Nature, a modern poet who cares for the subject, naturally—whatever

may be his personal view—adopts in the realm of his art. Wordsworth, a plain Christian at home, wrote about Nature as a Pantheist: the artist, as I said, loves to conceive of the Universe, not as dead, but as alive. Into that belief Shelley, in hours of inspiration, continually rose, and his work is seldom more impassioned and beautiful than in the passages where he feels and believes in this manner. The finest example is towards the close of the *Adonais*. In his mind however, the living spirit which, in its living, made the Universe, was not conceived of as Thought, as Wordsworth conceived it, but as Love operating into Beauty; and there is a passage on this idea in the fragment of the *Coliseum*, which is as beautiful in prose as that in *Adonais* is in verse. But it is only in higher poetic hours that Shelley seems or cares to realise this belief. In the quieter realms of poetry, in daily life, he confessed no such creed plainly; he had little or no belief in a thinking or loving existence behind the phenomenal universe. It is infinitely improbable, he says, that the cause of mind is similar to mind. Nothing can be more characteristic of him—and he has the same temper in other matters—than that he should have a faith with regard to a Source of Nature, into which he could soar when he pleased, in which he could live for a time, but which he did not choose to live in, to define, or to realise, continuously. When, in the *Prometheus Unbound*, he is forced, as it were, to

realise a central cause, he creates Demogorgon, the dullest of all his impersonations. It is scarcely an impersonation. Once he calls it a "living spirit," but it has neither form nor outline in his mind. He keeps it before him as an "awful Shape."

The truth is, the indefinite was a beloved element of his life. "Lift not the painted veil," he cries, "which those who live call Life." His worst pain was when he thought he had lifted it, and seemed to know the reality. But he did not always believe that he had done so, or he preferred to deny his conclusion. Not as a thinker in prose, but as a poet, he frequently loved the vague with an intensity which raised it almost into an object of worship. The speech of the Third Spirit, in the *Ode to Heaven*, is a wonderful instance of what I may call the rapture in indefiniteness. But this rapture had its other side, and when he was depressed by ill-health, the sense of a voiceless, boundless abyss, which for ever held its secret, and in which he floated, deepened his depression. The horror of a homeless and centreless heart which then beset him, is passionately expressed in the *Cenci*. Beatrice is speaking—

"Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts, if there should be  
No God, no Heaven, no Earth, in the void world;  
The wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled world."

But, on the whole, whether it brought him pain or joy, he preferred to be without a fixed belief with regard

to a source of Nature. Could he have done otherwise, could he have given continuous substance in his thoughts to the great conception of ideal Pantheism in which Wordsworth rested, Shelley's whole work on Nature and his description of her would have been more direct, palpable, and homely. He would have loved Nature more, and made us love it more.

The result of all this is that a great deal of his poetry of Nature has no ground in thought, and consequently wants power. It is not that he could not have had this foundation and its strength. Both are his when he chooses. But, for the most part, he did not choose. Such was his temperament that he liked better to live with Nature and be without a centre for her. He would be

Dizzy, lost—but unbewailing.

But I am not sure whether the love of the undefined did not, in the first instance, arise out of his love of the constantly changing, and that itself out of the very character of his intellect, and the temper of his heart. His intellect, incessantly shaken into movement by his imagination, continually threw into new shapes the constant ideas he possessed. His heart, out of which are the issues of imagination, loved deeply a few great conceptions, but wearied almost immediately of any special form in which he embodied them, and changed it for another. In the matter of human love, he was discontent with all the

earthly images he formed of the ideal he had loved and continued to love in his own soul, and he could not but tend to change the images. In the ordinary life of feeling, the moment any emotion arose in his heart, a hundred others came rushing from every quarter into the original feeling, and mingled with it, and changed its outward expression. Sometimes they all clamoured for expression, and we see that Shelley often tried to answer their call. It is when he does this that he is most obscure—obscure through abundance of feelings and their forms. His intellect, heart, and imagination were in a kind of Heraclitean flux, perpetually evolving fresh images, and the new, in swift succession, clouding the old ; and then, impatient weariness of rest or of any one thing whatever, driving forward within him this incessant movement, he sank, at last and for the time, exhausted—"As summer clouds disburthened of their rain."

There is no need to illustrate this from his poetry. The huddling rush of images, the changeful crowd of thoughts are found on almost every page. It is often only the oneness of the larger underlying emotion or idea which makes the work clear. We strive to grasp a Proteus as we read. In an instant the thought or the feeling Shelley is expressing becomes impalpable, vanishes, reappears in another form, and then in a multitude of other forms, each in turn eluding the grasp of the intellect, until at last we seize the god himself, and know what Shelley meant, or



Shelley felt. In all this he resembles, at a great distance, Shakspeare ; and has, at that distance, and in this aspect of his art, a strength and a weakness similar to, but not identical with, that which Shakspeare possessed,—the strength of changeful activity of imagination, the weakness of being unable, through eagerness, to omit, to select, to co-ordinate his images. Yet, at his highest, when the full force of genius is urged by full and dominant emotion, what poetry it is ! How magnificent is the impassioned unity of the whole in spite of the diversity of the parts ! But this lofty height is reached in only a few of Shelley's lyrics, and in a few passages in his longer poems.

At almost every point, the scenery of the sky he drew so fondly images this temper of Shelley's mind, this incessant building and unbuilding, this cloud-changefulness of his imagination.

I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
And out of the caverns of rain,  
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb  
I arise and unbuild it again.

That is a picture of Shelley himself at work on a feeling or on a thought. "I change, but I cannot die."

I might illustrate this love of the changing from the history of his life, of his affections, of his theories ; from his varied nature, and way of work, as the prose thinker and the poet ; from the variety of the sub-

jects on which he wrote, and which he half attempted—for he naturally fell into the fragmentary—from the eagerness with which he searched for new thought, new experiences of feeling, new literatures, even from his love of the strange and sometimes of the horrible; from that discontent he had in the doctrines of others, until he had added to them, as he did to Plato's doctrine of Love, something of his own in order to make them new,—were there any necessity to enlarge on that which stands so clear. In all these things, what was said of Shelley's movements to and fro in the house at Lerici is true of his movement through the house of thought or of feeling. "Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows when or where." But it remains to be said, that all through this secondary changefulness, he held fast to certain primary ideas of life, of morality, and of his art, which no one who cares for him can fail to discover.

There was, then, in Shelley this love of indefiniteness, and this love of changefulness. Which of the two was the cause of the other I cannot tell, but I am inclined to think that the latter was the first. It is better, however, to keep them both equally in view in the study of Shelley's art, and they are both well illustrated in his poetry of Nature.

I have said that his love of the indefinite with regard to a source of Nature weakened his work on Nature. His love of changefulness also weakened it

by luring the imagination away from a direct sight of the thing into the sight of a multitude of images suggested by the thing.

But in the case of those who have great genius, that which enfeebles one part of their work often gives strength to another, and in three several ways these elements in Shelley's mind made his work on Nature of great value.

1. His love of that which is indefinite and changeful made him enjoy and describe better than any other English poet that scenery of the clouds and sky which is indefinite owing to infinite change of appearance. The incessant forming and unforming of the vapours which he describes in the last verse of *The Cloud*, is that which he most cared to paint. Wordsworth often draws, and with great force, the aspect of the sky, and twice with great elaboration in the *Excursion*; but it is only a momentary aspect, and it is mixed up with illustrations taken from the works of men, with the landscape of the earth below where men are moving, with his own feelings about the scene, and with moral or imaginative lessons. Shelley, when he is at work on the sky, troubles it with none of these human matters, and he describes not only the momentary aspect, but also the change and progress of the sunset or the storm. And he does this with the greatest care, and with a characteristic attention to those delicate tones and half-tones of colour which resemble the subtle imagina-

tions and feelings he liked to discover in human Nature, and to which he gave form in poetry.

In his very first poem, in *Queen Mab* (Part II.), there is one of these studies of Sunset. It is splendidly eclipsed by that in the beginning of *Julian and Maddalo*, where the Euganean Hills are lifted away from the earth and made a portion of the scenery of the sky. A special moment of sunset, with the moon and the evening-star in a sky reddened with tempest, is given in *Hellas*, but here, being in a drama, it is mingled with the fate of an empire. The Dawns are drawn with the same care as the sunsets, but with less passion. There are many of them, but the most beautiful perhaps is that in the beginning of the second Act of the *Prometheus*. The changes of colour, as the light increases in the spaces of pure sky and in the clouds, are watched and described with precise truth; the slow progress of the dawn, during a long time, is noted down line by line, and all the movement of the mists and of the clouds "shepherded by the slow unwilling wind." Nor is that minuteness of observation wanting which is the proof of careful love. Shelley's imaginative study of beauty is revealed in the way the growth of the dawn is set before us by the waxing and waning of the light of the star, as the vapours rise and melt before the morn.

The Storms are even better than the sunsets and dawns. I have drawn attention in the notes to the finest of these in the first canto of the *Revolt of Islam*.

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There is another description at the beginning of the eleventh canto of the same poem (p. 82 of this book), in which the vast wall of blue cloud before which grey mists are flying is cloven by the wind, and the sunbeams, like a river of fire flowing between lofty banks, pour through the chasm across the sea, while the shattered vapours which the coming storm has driven forth to make the opening, are tossed, all crimson, into the sky. This is a favourite picture of Shelley's. In the *Vision of the Sea* it is transferred from sunset to sunrise. The fierce wind coming from the west rushes like a flooded river upon the dense clouds which are piled in the east, and rends them asunder, and through the gorge thus cleft

the beams of the sunrise flow in,  
Unimpeded, keen, golden and crystalline,  
Banded armies of light and air.

The description is a little over-wrought, but criticism has no voice when it thinks that no other poet has ever attempted to render, with the same absolute loss of himself, the successive changes, minute by minute, of such an hour of tempest and of sunrise. We are alone with Nature ; I might even say, We see Nature alone with herself. Still greater, more poetic, less sensational, is the approach of the gale in the *Ode to the West Wind*, where the wind itself is the river on which the forest of the sky shakes down its foliage of clouds, and these are tossed upwards like a Mænad's "uplifted hair," or trail downwards, like

the "locks" of Typhon,<sup>1</sup> the vanguard of the tempest. In gathered mass behind, the congregated might of vapours is rising to vault the heaven like a sepulchral dome. Nothing can be closer than the absolute truth to the working of the clouds that fly before the main body of a storm, which is here kept in the midst of these daring comparisons of the imagination.

The same delight in the indefinite and changeful aspects of Nature appears in Shelley's power of describing vast landscapes, such as that seen at noon-tide from the Euganean Hills, or that which the poet in *Alastor* looks upon from the edge of the mountain precipice. Both swim in the kind of light that makes all objects undefined, deep noon, and sunset light.

Kindred to this is Shelley's pleasure in the intricate, changeful, and incessant weaving and unweaving of nature's life in a great forest. In the *Recollection* it is the Pisan Pineta he describes, and that is a painting directly after Nature. But he has his own ideal forest, of which he tells in *Alastor*, in *Rosalind and Helen*, in the *Triumph of Life*, and again and again in the *Prometheus*. It is no narrow wood, but a universe of forest; full of all trees and flowers, in which are streams, and pools, and lakes, and lawny glades, and hills, and caverns; and in whose multitudinous scenery Shelley's imagination

<sup>1</sup> I wonder that Mr. Ruskin has not quoted this verse in the "Angel of the Sea" (*Modern Painters*, vol. v.) Shelley's lines might well form a text for that chapter.

could lose and find itself without an end. The special love of caverns, with their dim recesses, adds another characteristic touch. These then,—The scenery of the sky, of the forest, of the vast plain,—are the aspects of nature Shelley loved the most, and out of the weakness that elsewhere made him too indefinite, and too uncertain through desire of change, for Wordsworth's special kind of descriptive power, arose the force with which he realised them.

2. Again, just because Shelley had no wish to conceive of Nature as involved in one definite thought, he had the power of conceiving the life of separate things in Nature with astonishing individuality. When he wrote of the Cloud, or of Arethusa, or of the Moon, or of the Earth, as distinct existences, he was not led away from their solitary personality by any universal existence in which they were merged, or by the necessity of adding to these any tinge of humanity, any elements of thought or love, such as the Pantheist is almost sure to add. His imagination was free to realise pure Nature, and the power by which he does this, as well as the work done, are quite unique in modern poetry. Theology, with its one Creator of the Universe; Pantheism, with its "one spirit's plastic stress;" Science with its one Energy, forbid the modern poet, whose mind is settled into any one of these three views, to see anything in Nature as having a separate life of its own. He cannot, as a Greek could do, divide the life of the Air from that of the

Earth, of the cloud from that of the stream. But Shelley, able to loosen himself from all these modern conceptions which unite the various universe, could and did, when he pleased, divide and subdivide the life of Nature in the same way as a Greek—and this is the cause why even in the midst of wholly modern imagery and a modern manner, one is conscious of a Greek note in many passages of his poetry of Nature. The little poem on the Dawn might be conceived by a primitive Aryan. It is<sup>1</sup> a Nature myth. But Shelley's conceptions of the life of these natural things are less human than even the Homeric Greek or early Indian poet would have made them. They described the work of Nature in terms of human act. Shelley's spirits of the Earth and Moon are utterly apart from our world of thought and from our life. Of this class of poems *The Cloud* is the most perfect example. It describes the life of the Cloud as it might have been a million years before man came on earth. The "sanguine Sunrise" and the "orbed Maiden," the moon, who are the playmates of the cloud, are pure elemental beings.

The same observation is true if we take a poem on a living thing in Nature, like *The Skylark*, into which human sentiment is introduced. The sentiment belongs to Shelley, not to the lark. The bird has joy, but it is not our joy. It is "unbodied joy," nor "can we come near it." Wordsworth's *Skylark* is truer,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 152.



perhaps, to the everyday life of the bird, and the poet remembers, because he loves his own home, that the singer will return to its nest; but Shelley sees and hears the bird who, in its hour of inspired singing, will not recollect that it has a home. Wordsworth humanises the whole spirit of "the pilgrim of the sky"—"True to the kindred points of heaven and home." Shelley never brings the bird into contact with us at all. It is left in the sky, singing; it will never leave the sky. It is the archetype of the lark we seem to listen to, and yet we cannot conceive it, we have no power—"What thou art we know not." The flowers in the *Sensitive Plant* have the same apartness from humanity, and are wholly different beings and in a different world from the Daisy or the Celandine of Wordsworth. It is only the Sensitive Plant, and that is Shelley himself, which has an inner sympathy with the Lady of the garden.

Shelley, then, could isolate and perceive distinct existences in Nature as if he were himself one of these existences. It was a strange power, and we naturally cannot love with a human love things so represented. In Wordsworth's poems we touch the human heart of flowers and birds. In Shelley's we touch "Shapes that haunt Thought's wildernesses." Yet it is quite possible, though we cannot feel affection for Shelley's Cloud or Bird, that they are both truer to the actual fact of things than Wordsworth made his birds and clouds. Strip off the imaginative clothing from *The*

*Cloud*, and Science will support every word of it. Let the Skylark sing, let the flowers grow, for their own joy alone. In truth, what sympathy have they, what sympathy has Nature with Man? We may not like to think of Nature in this way; we are left quite cold by *The Cloud*, and by the spirits of the Earth and Moon in the *Prometheus*; and if we are not left as cold by *The Skylark*, it is because we are made to think of our own sorrow, not because we care for the bird. But whether we like or no to see Nature in this fashion, we should be grateful for these unique representations, and to the poet who was able to make them. In this matter also Shelley's want of a central and uniting Thought in Nature made his strength.

The other side of Shelley's relation to Nature is a remarkable contrast to this statement. When he was absorbed in his own being, and writing poems which concerned himself alone, he makes Nature the mere image of his own feelings, the creature of his mood. In his "life alone doth Nature live." This was the natural result, at these times, of his intellectual rejection of such Pantheism as enabled Wordsworth always to distinguish between himself and the Nature he perceived. The Nature Wordsworth saw we can love well, because it is not ourselves—never a reflection of ourselves. The Nature such as Shelley saw in *Alastor* is not easy to love, because it is ourselves in other form. For this reason also we are not able

to love Nature, when thus represented by Shelley, so well as we love her in Wordsworth.<sup>1</sup>

3. Lastly, on this subject, the vagueness and changefulness of Shelley's feeling and view of Nature, except in the instances mentioned, the dreams and shadows of it in his poetry that incessantly form and dissolve like the upper clouds of the sky, each fleeting while its successor is being born, and few living long enough to be outlined, are the only images we possess in art, save perhaps in music, of the many hours we ourselves pass with Nature when we neither think nor feel, but drift and dream incessantly from one impression to another, enjoying, but never defining our enjoyment, receiving moment by moment, but never caring to say to any single impression, "Stay and keep me company." In this thing also, Shelley's weakness made his power.

This want of definite belief and of its force belongs also to his conception of the ideal state of mankind. He does not see quite clearly what he desires for man, and describes the golden age chiefly by negatives of wrong. At times he rises into a passionate realisation of his

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's love of the undefined and changing is still further illustrated by the fact that we see Nature in his poetry in these three ways—on all of which I have dwelt. We sometimes look on her as the ideal Pantheist beholds her; we look on her again as the mere reflection of the poet's moods; we look on her often as she may be in herself, apart from theories about her, apart from man.

Utopia, as he rises into Pantheism, but he cannot long remain in it. The high-wrought prophecy, too weak to keep the height it has gained, sinks down again and again into an abyss of seeming hopelessness. The last stanza of the *Ode to Liberty* is the type of many an hour of his life, and of the close of many a poem. But he never let hopelessness or depression master him. Shelley is full of resurrection power, and the fall from the peak of prophecy is more the result of reaction after impassioned excitement, than the result of any unbelief in his hopes for men, or in that on which they were grounded.

These hopes, that belief, had their strong foundation. There was one thing at least that Shelley grasped and realised with force in poetry—the moralities of the heart in their relation to the progress of Mankind. Love and its eternity; mercy, forgiveness, and endurance, as forms of love; joy and freedom, justice and truth as the results of love; the sovereign right of Love to be the ruler of the Universe, and the certainty of its victory,—these were the deepest realities, the only absolute certainty, the only centre in Shelley's mind; and whenever, in behalf of the whole Race, he speaks of them, and of the duties and hopes that follow from them, strength is then instinctive and vital in his imagination. Neither now nor hereafter can men lose this powerful and profound impression. It is Shelley's great contribution to the progress of humanity.

But he could not combine with this large view and this large sympathy with the interests of Man, personal sympathy with personal human life. That is absent from his poetry, and his want of it was confirmed by his exile. Confined to a small circle of which he was the centre, among foreigners, feeling himself repudiated by the society of his own country, and incapable of such quiet association with the lives of men and women as Wordsworth loved and enjoyed, it is no wonder that large spaces of human life are entirely unreflected and unidealised in his poetry. The common human heart was not his theme, nor did he care to write of it. And, so far, he is less universal than Wordsworth, and less the great poet. But on the other hand he did two things, in his work on human nature, that Wordsworth could not do. First, he realised in song, so far as it was possible, the impalpable dreams of the poetic temperament, those which, when they arise in happiness, he expresses in the little poem, *On a poet's lips I slept*, and others also less joyous—the lonely wanderings of regretful thought, the imagination in its hours of child-like play with images, the moments when we are on the edge where emotion and thought incessantly change into one another, the visions of Nature which we compose but which are not Nature, the sorrows and depressions which have no name and to which we allot no cause, the depths of passionate fancy when we have not only no relation to mankind, but hate

to feel that relation. Of all this Wordsworth gives us nothing; and though what he does give us is of more use and worth to us as men who have to do with men, yet Shelley's work in this is dear to our personal life, and has in fact as much to do with one realm of humanity as the sorrow of Michael, or the daily life of the dalesmen have with another. English poetry needed the expression of these things; Shelley's expression of them is unique, but I doubt whether he would ever have expressed them in so complete a way had he not been thrown into isolation.

Secondly, there is an element almost altogether wanting in Wordsworth, the absence of which forbids us to class him as a poet who has touched all the important sides of human life—the element of passionate love. A few of his poems, such as *Barbara*, or in another kind, *Laodameia*, solemnly glide into it and retreat, but on the whole, this, the most universal subject of lyric poetry, was not felt by Wordsworth. It was felt by Shelley, but not quite naturally, not as Burns, or even Byron felt it. Love, in his poetry, sometimes dies into dreams, sometimes likes its imagery better than itself. It is troubled with a philosophy; it seems now and again to be even bored, if I may be allowed the word, by its own ideality. As Shelley soared but rarely into definite Pantheism, so he rose but rarely into definite passion, nor does he often care to realise it. It was frequently

his deliberate choice to celebrate the love which did not "deal with flesh and blood," and as frequently, when he writes directly of love, he prefers to touch the lip of the cup, but not to drink, lest in the reality he should lose the charm of indefiniteness, of ignorance, of pursuit. Of course he was therefore fickle.

For this very reason, however, two realms in this aspect of his art belong to him. Neither of them is the realm of joyous passion, but one is the realm of its ideal approaches, and the other the realm of its ideal regret. No one has expressed so well the hopes, and fears, and fancies, and dreams, which the heart creates for its own pleasure and sorrow, when it plays with love which it realises within itself, but which it never means to realise without; and this is a realm which is so much lived in by many that they ought to be grateful to Shelley for his expression of it. No one else has done it, and it is perfectly done.

But still more perfect, and perhaps more beautiful than any other work of his, are the poems written in the realm of ideal Regret. Whenever he came close to earthly love, touched it, and then of his own will passed it by, it became, as he looked back upon it, ideal, and a part of that indefinite world he loved. The ineffable regret of having lost that which one did not choose to take, is most marvellously, most passionately expressed by Shelley. Song after song records it. The music changes from air to air, but the theme is the same, and so is the character of the

music. And, like all the rest of his work, it is unique.

But in this matter, a change passed over Shelley before he died. It is impossible not to feel that the poems written for Mrs. Williams, a whole chain of which exist, are different from the other love poems. They have the same imaginative qualities as the previous songs, and they belong also to the two realms of which I have written above, but there is a new note in them, the beginning of the unmistakable directness of passion. It is, of course, modified by the circumstances, but there it is. And it is from the threshold of this actual world that he looks back on *Epipsychidion* and feels that it belonged to "a part of him that was already dead." The philosophy which made Emilia the shadow of a spiritual Beauty is conspicuous by its total absence from all these later love poems. Moreover, they are not, like the others, all written in the same atmosphere. The atmosphere of ideal love, however varied its cloud-imagery, is always the same thin ether. But these poems breathe in the changing atmosphere of the Earth, and they one and all possess reality. Every one feels that *Ariel to Miranda*, *The Invitation*, *The Recollection*, have the variety of true passion. But none of them reach the natural joy of Burns in passionate love. Two exceptions, however, exist, both dating from this time, and both written away from his own life—the *Bridal Song*,



and the song *To Night*. These seem to prove that, had Shelley lived, we might have had from him vivid, fresh, and natural songs of passion.

Had he lived! Had not the sea been too envious, what might we not have possessed and loved! It were too curious perhaps to speculate, but Shelley seems to have been recovering the power of working on subjects beyond himself, in the quiet of those last days at Lerici. He was always capable of rising again, and the extreme clearness and positive element of his intellect acted, like a sharp physician, on his passion-haunted heart and freed it, when it was out-wearied with its own feeling, from self-slavery.

While still at Pisa, at the beginning of 1822, Shelley set to work on a Drama, *Charles I.*, the motive of which was to be the ruin of the king through pride and its weakness, the same motive as *Coriolanus*. It was to be "the birth of severe and high feelings," and to transcend the *Cenci* as a work of art. But severe feeling was not then the temper of his mind, nor could he at that time lose himself enough to create an external world. He laid the play aside, saying that he had not sufficient interest in English history to continue it. Yet it is plain, even from the fragments we possess, how great was the effort Shelley then made to realise, even more than in the *Cenci*, other characters than his own. There is not a trace in it of his own self. It is full of steady power, power more at its ease than in the *Cenci*. The characters stand clear,

and are carefully distinguished, so as not only to represent the various elements in England which brought about, in their clashing together, the ruin of monarchy, but also to show the forces and weaknesses in each of the greater personages which led to their personal ruin or success. The unconscious movement of Shelley's imagination—within the speeches set to each character—in vivid illustration, in quick invention of changes of feeling, and in its harmonising of the whole and the parts, is, like the excellence just mentioned, in the manner of Shakspeare's art, and approaches his strength. Archy, the fool, is made perhaps too imaginative in phrase, yet he is much nearer than any other poet's creation of the same kind to the fools of Shakspeare, so wise because they are half mad. Yet neither in this, nor in the rest, does Shelley directly imitate Shakspeare here, as he sometimes does in the *Cenci*. The principles of Shakspeare's art are followed; the work itself is quite original. The same thing is true of the blank verse. It is built on the model of Shakspeare's, but it is Shelley's own, and its movement, sure to be beautiful in the hands of this master of all melody in all kinds of verse, is more free, more fitted to the changing moods of the speakers, and more delightful than it is in the *Cenci*. The noble speech of Hampden, with which this fragment concludes, illustrates and confirms all I have said. It is quite plain that it cannot be said of the artist who did this piece of work that he had exhausted his vein.

It becomes still more clear that Shelley would have done more for us when we consider the *Triumph of Life*, the gravest of his poems. Its personal interest is as great as its interest for this generation. He may have been composing it when the sea overwhelmed him. Over it gathers, then, all the tenderness which belongs to last words, and all the power they possess to awaken love, pity, and enthusiasm. Its somewhat morbid view of life is not to be wondered at, so much as to be forgiven for the sake of the strength which rises through the dim allegory, like a fountain which will become a river. It proves that, had he lived, he would have filled his poetry and his life with new intention. And it is worthy of the cry which, closing the last poem in this book, is prophetic of that unconquerable hope for mankind which, underlying the greater part of Shelley's poetry, has made half its influence upon the world—

O wind,  
If winter comes, can spring be far behind?

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#### NOTE ON THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

THIS poem is so difficult to understand that I have ventured to make the following analysis :—

It opens with a noble picture of sunrise, filled with solemn and stately images, and more disengaged from self than any of Shelley's previous work. He then describes himself passing into a waking trance, in which he is conscious that in some previous exist-

ence he has been in the same place, and heard and seen the same things. And in that trance he sees a Vision.

He finds himself on a dusty and flowerless road, on either side of which is a forest full of sweet streams and flowers and lawns, and on the road a multitude of folk, old age and youth, and manhood and infancy, all hastening onward like a torrent. This represents, under the common allegory, the ordinary life of men. What kind of life that now seemed to Shelley is described in the lines which begin—

“Some flying from the thing they feared,”

but of all this crowd, none, so hurried and so serious was their folly, could hear the sweetness of the stream or know the beauty of the wood. Nor did any understand—and this was the universal condition,—“whither he went or whence he came, or why he made one of the multitude.” Life is an inexplicable secret, and in the terrible attraction this secret has for men and in their failure to solve it, lies the reason of the victory Life wins over its victims. In the midst of this crowd the Triumph passes by. As the throng grew wilder, a cold glare, that obscured the sun with a false light, came, and in the glare a chariot, and in the chariot, Life, the Conqueror. None could see its incommunicable face, double-hooded, double-caped, over its head a cloud-like crape; nor its form, crouching like age within the car, as one who sat in the shadow of a

tomb ; while the ethereal gloom that poured forth from this dread Shape tempered the fierce light in which the chariot moved. Every image in this allegorical representation tells of the mystery of life, the unfathomable riddle that none could penetrate, but which conquered and led all captive. It is this thought which is the foundation of the Poem. The deep concealment is doubled by the further imagery. The Charioteer is a four-faced Shadow—Time itself, perhaps, with its three faces that look into the present, the past, and the future ; but its eyes are banded so that it cannot see while in the service of Life. The winged shapes that draw the car are lost to sight in thick lightnings. And the Charioteer guides the car blindly, so that its course is aimless. Life itself knows not where it is conducted. Before the car is the wild dance of youth, seeking in tempestuous pleasure to find the secret of Life, and outspeeding Life ; behind it, the foul and impotent dance of age, still cleaving to Life, still limping to reach the glare of Life's light ; and the youths and maidens are overtaken and trampled by the car of Life into foam like the barren sea-foam, and the old sink into corrupted dust.<sup>1</sup> These are the common crew who have only sought to live according to impulse and desires.

There are others, however, who do not belong to the two bands before and behind, but are dragged, chained captives, along with the triumphal car. These

<sup>1</sup> The whole of this may be compared with Tennyson's *Vision of Sin*,

are they who tried to know what Life was, or to conquer it ; who laboured, but in vain ; who died and never knew the secret.

All those who had grown old in power  
Or misery, all who had their age subdued  
By action or by suffering,

alike the famous and the infamous. Only a few are not seen there, are not captives—the Prophets of Mankind, who touched the world with flame, and then fled back to their native noon ; who put aside the diadem ; who were not victims of Life, because they despised all that Life could offer ; who conquered its secret by not caring to penetrate it, of whom the types were they of Athens and Jerusalem—Socrates and Christ.

In his trance Shelley asks, What is this ? And a Shape, like an old root by the wayside, who is Rousseau, answers him that it is the pageantry of Life's Triumph, and that if Shelley can forbear to join the dance—as he does forbear—he will unfold that to which this deep scorn—this thing worthy of deep scorn—has led him and his companions. “ Then, if you want further knowledge, follow the car ; for me, I am weary, nor would corruption now inherit so much of Rousseau

“ if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit  
Had been with purer sentiment supplied.”

Who are those chained to the car ? Shelley asks.

"The wise, the great, the unforgotten," who were wise, but did not know themselves. Their love, their might, that won for them empire, "could not repress the mystery within." For at the last, that fierce mystery shrouded in the car, Life, and the question what it is, arose in their soul and conquered them, and deep night swallowed them.

Napoleon is then seen, and all the conquerors of the world by force of arms or intellect, chained to Life's car and vanquished by its scornful secret. I myself, speaks Rousseau, was overcome by my own heart alone, that nothing in the world *could temper to its object*.<sup>1</sup>

The course of the vision is here interrupted by two speeches of Shelley's, and both of them are meant to mark his present apartness from the throng of Life and his disdain of those who, through desire of conquest or fame, were slaves to Life. The last of these speeches, and Rousseau's answer to it, are steeped in Shelley's passionate sense that humanity was but an imagery of an eternal Oneness behind it, which, reflected in the ever-changing mirror of circumstance and nature, made its infinite variety. But all the reflections are reflections, nothing more. The same thought is in *Adonais*, lii. Here, it is—

Figures ever new  
Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may ;

---

<sup>1</sup> How close to truth !

We have but thrown, as those before us threw,  
Our shadows on it as it passed away.

Then he sees, captives also, "the mighty phantoms of an elder day." Plato expiating his too great feeling of joy and of sorrow, not his own master, whom Life conquered at last by love; Aristotle, Alexander, whose conquests the Life of the world finally made nought; the Elder Bards, "who quelled

"The passions which they sung, as by their strain  
May well be known : their living melody  
Tempers its own contagion to the vein  
Of those who are infected with it."

Even these, who quelled passions, are captive to Life, because they were too curious of the passions, and because they knew their work would stir in others the passions they themselves subdued. But they are of a higher cast than Rousseau, who, like Shelley, "suffered what he wrote," and whose words have seeds of misery.

Then the dreamer sees the Emperors of Rome and her great Bishops, whose power was given but to destroy; and, sick at heart, turns again to Rousseau (if, as I think, there is no long break here in the poem, and the "leader" mentioned is still Rousseau and not another), and asks him how his course began and why. Rousseau then tells his tale and that of the pageant; and portions of the story are so like what Shelley has at other times said of his own life, that it seems as if he would have partly



told his own story in the tale that Rousseau tells. Rousseau thinks that if Shelley would become actor or victim instead of spectator in this wretchedness, and follow the Conqueror—

What thou wouldst be taught I then may learn  
From thee.

That is, he would learn from Shelley's fate to understand his own.

A new phase of the allegory now begins ; the story of a single life and its overthrow by Life. Rousseau describes himself asleep at the portals of this and of the antenatal world, a place here imaged as a cavern, through which flows a stream in which all things are forgotten. All those who are in the pageant of life have also been, as we understand at the end, asleep in this oblivious valley. When he arose into being, in infancy, he says that all things around kept the trace of some diviner light than that of earth, and melodies that confused the sense of earthly things were heard. This is the half Platonic conception of reminiscence. Boyhood comes, imaged by the brightness of morning that floods the cavern, and then, a Shape all light stood before him, flinging freshness, and in her hand a cup of nepenthe. It is the Spirit of the aspirations and dreams of youth, the vision of Beauty Shelley saw, the Vision which, in different forms, all the creators see. She leads the youth forth out of the cave, and as he follows her all his thoughts were strewn under her feet like embers, and,

thought by thought, she quenched them, and all that was, seemed, as he gazed, as if it had been not. That is the swift succession of aspiration, thought, and feeling, each dying as its successor is born, which we know when we are young, and the sense, then also ours, of all the outward world becoming, in the pursuit of the ideal, as if it had no real being. At last the mystery of life which cannot be repressed, begins to stir within the youth. He can no longer resist the fatal question all must ask, and—"Show whence I came, he cries, and where I am, and why." "Arise and quench thy thirst," the Shape replies; and as he drank the cup, this Dream of youth grew dim, and her light—a light of heaven that hereafter glimmered only, forever sought again, forever lost—waned in the glare of the Masque of Life that now rushed through the forest. It is the entrance into manhood, life as it is in the world of action. He sees—and it seems the answer to his question—the car in which Life itself is borne, its captives, and those who played, or gazed; or followed, or out-speeded the car—all as yet young. He himself plunges into "the thickest billows of that living storm," but before the chariot had begun to climb the steep of middle age a new wonder grew.

The weariness, the cruel working of life's secret, begins to exhaust and destroy all the pleasure, all the eagerness, with which men at the first follow the chariot of Life. The way in which Shelley images this change, and the cause he assigns for it are as imaginative

as they are original. Shadows began to people the grove, dense flocks of phantoms, of various quality and shape, who hid in the capes of kings, and rode across the tiara of popes; and some were old anatomies that hatched broods, and whose dead eyes took power and gave it to those who ruined earth; and some fell like flashes of discoloured snow on the bosoms of the young and were melted by the glow which they extinguished; and others, like small gnats, thronged about the brows of lawyer, statesman, priest, and theorist. Shelley invents all kinds of them, and each has its meaning. These are the thoughts, written or spoken, the work and the passions of men; all that men have poured forth from their hearts or impressed upon the world; the old theologies, the old doctrines of kingcraft whose dead eyes have power; the political theories, poetry, philosophies, which have been sent forth from the beginning of humanity, but which poured forth so fast and furious before the Revolution. Rousseau knows whence they came. "Each one

"Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly  
These shadows."

Shadows as they were, form was given them by the creative rays of the car, for all the thoughts and feelings of men are moulded by the mystery of life. And so moulded, and darkening all the ways of the pageant with the sense of the deep mystery that gave them

shape, they did their work, and hour by hour the unconquerable secret, embodied in the forms given to it by the infinite questioning of men, destroyed its victims.

From every form the beauty slowly waned ;  
From every firmest limb and fairest face  
The strength and freshness fell like dust—

And long before the day of life

Was old, the joy which waked like heaven's glance  
The sleepers in the oblivious valley died ;  
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,  
And fell as I have fallen, by the wayside ;—

And those fell soonest who had done most creative work ; who had thought and felt and expressed the most—the more passionate, whether for good or evil, the worse off.

Those soonest from whose forms most shadows passed,  
And least of strength and beauty did abide.

“ Then what is Life ? ” I cried.

And with that cry all that Shelley wrote is ended.

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POEMS FROM SHELLEY



## HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY.

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power  
Floats tho' unseen amongst us,—visiting  
This various world with as inconstant wing  
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—  
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,  
It visits with inconstant glance  
Each human heart and countenance ;  
Like hues and harmonies of evening,—  
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—  
Like memory of music fled,—  
Like aught that for its grace may be  
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate  
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon  
Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone?  
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,  
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?  
Ask why the sunlight not for ever  
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,  
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shewn,  
Why fear and dream and death and birth  
Cast on the daylight of this earth  
Such gloom,—why man has such a scope  
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever  
To sage or poet these responses given—  
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,  
Remain the records of their vain endeavour,  
Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to  
sever,

From all we hear and all we see,  
Doubt, chance, and mutability.  
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,  
Or music by the night wind sent,  
Thro' strings of some still instrument,  
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,  
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart  
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.  
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,  
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,  
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.  
Thou messenger of sympathies,  
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—  
Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,  
Like darkness to a dying flame!  
Depart not as thy shadow came,  
Depart not—lest the grave should be,  
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped  
Thro' many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,  
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing  
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.  
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed,  
I was not heard—I saw them not—  
When musing deeply on the lot

Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing  
All vital things that wake to bring  
News of birds and blossoming,—  
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;  
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy !

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow ?  
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now  
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours  
Each from his voiceless grave : they have in visioned  
    bowers  
Of studious zeal or love's delight  
Outwatched with me the envious night—  
They know that never joy illumed my brow  
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free  
This world from its dark slavery,  
That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,  
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene  
When noon is past—there is a harmony  
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,  
Which thro' the summer is not heard or seen,  
As if it could not be, as if it had not been !  
Thus let thy power, which like the truth  
Of nature on my passive youth  
Descended, to my onward life supply  
Its calm—to one who worships thee,  
And every form containing thee,  
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind  
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

## THE POET'S PHILOSOPHY.

[WE] look on that which cannot change—the One,  
 The unborn and the undying. Earth and Ocean,  
 Space, and the isles of life or light that gem  
 The sapphire floods of interstellar air,  
 This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,  
 With all its cressets of immortal fire,  
 Whose outwall, bastionèd impreguably  
 Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them  
 As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this Whole  
 Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,  
 With all the silent or tempestuous workings  
 By which they have been, are, or cease to be,  
 Is but a vision ; all that it inherits  
 Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams ;  
 Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less  
 The future and the past are idle shadows  
 Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being :  
 Nought is but that which feels itself to be.

. . . . .

*Hellas.*



## THE POET'S WORLD.

ON a poet's lips I slept  
Dreaming like a love-adept  
In the sound his breathing kept ;  
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,  
But feeds on the aërial kisses  
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.  
He will watch from dawn to gloom  
The lake-reflected sun illumine  
The yellow bees in the ivy bloom,  
Nor heed nor see what things they be ;  
But from these create he can  
Forms more real than living man,  
Nurslings of immortality !

*Prometheus Unbound.*

## Alastor.

"Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quærebam quid amarem,  
amans amare."—*Confess. St. Augustine.*<sup>3</sup>

THE poem entitled "ALASTOR" may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius, led forth, by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous and tranquil and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened, and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful or wise or beautiful which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover, could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men.

The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the Furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious, as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish, through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

“ The good die first,  
And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust,  
Burn to the socket !”

EARTH, ocean, air, belovèd brotherhood !  
If our great Mother has imbued my soul  
With aught of natural piety to feel  
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine ;  
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,  
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,

And solemn midnight's tingling silentness ;  
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,  
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns  
Of starry ice the gray grass and bare boughs ;  
If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes  
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me ;  
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast  
I consciously have injured, but still loved  
And cherished these my kindred ; then forgive  
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw  
No portion of your wonted favour now !

Mother of this unfathomable world !  
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved  
Thee ever, and thee only ; I have watched  
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,  
And my heart ever gazes on the depth  
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed  
In charnels and on coffins, where black death  
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,  
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings  
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost  
Thy messenger, to render up the tale  
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,  
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,  
Like an inspired and desperate alchymist  
Staking his very life on some dark hope,  
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks  
With my most innocent love, until strange tears  
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made  
Such magic as compels the charmed night  
To render up thy charge : . . . and, though ne'er yet  
Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,

Enough from incommunicable dream,  
And twilight phantasms, and deep noonday thought,  
Has shone within me, that serenely now  
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre  
Suspended in the solitary dome  
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,  
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain  
May modulate with murmurs of the air,  
And motions of the forests and the sea,  
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns  
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb  
No human hands with pious reverence reared,  
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds  
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid  
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness :—  
A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked  
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,  
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep :—  
Gentle, and brave, and generous, no lorn hard  
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh :  
He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude.  
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,  
And virgins, as unknown he past, have pined  
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.  
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,  
And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,  
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream,  
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight  
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air

Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.  
The fountains of divine philosophy  
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,  
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past  
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt  
And knew. When early youth had past, he left  
His cold fireside and alienated home  
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.  
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness  
Has lured his fearless steps ; and he has bought  
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,  
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps  
He like her shadow has pursued, where'er  
The red volcano overcanopies  
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice  
With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes  
On black bare pointed islets ever beat  
With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves  
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs  
Of fire and poison, inaccessible  
To avarice or pride, their starry domes  
Of diamond and of gold expand above  
Numberless and immeasurable halls,  
Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines  
Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.  
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty  
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven  
And the green earth lost in his heart its claims  
To love and wonder ; he would linger long  
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,  
Until the doves and squirrels would partake  
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,  
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,

And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er  
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend  
Her timid steps to gaze upon a form  
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step

Obedient to high thoughts, has visited  
The awful ruins of the days of old :  
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste  
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers  
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,  
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange  
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,  
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,  
Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills  
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,  
Stupendous columns, and wild images  
Of more than man, where marble dæmons watch  
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men  
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,  
He lingered, poring on memorials  
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day  
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon  
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades  
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed  
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind  
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw  
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,  
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,  
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole  
From duties and repose to tend his steps :—

Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe  
To speak her love :—and watched his nightly sleep,  
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips  
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath  
Of innocent dreams arose : then, when red morn  
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home  
Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet wandering on, through Arabie  
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,  
And o'er the aërial mountains which pour down  
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,  
In joy and exultation held his way ;  
Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within  
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine  
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,  
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched  
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep  
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet  
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid  
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.  
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul  
Heard in the calm of thought ; its music long,  
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held  
His inmost sense suspended in its web  
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.  
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,  
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,  
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,  
Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood  
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame  
A permeating fire : wild numbers then  
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs



Subdued by its own pathos : her fair hands  
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp  
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins  
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.  
The beating of her heart was heard to fill  
The pauses of her music, and her breath  
Tumultuously accorded with those fits  
Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,  
As if her heart impatiently endured  
Its bursting burthen : at the sound he turned,  
And saw by the warm light of their own life  
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil  
Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,  
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,  
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips  
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly.  
His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess  
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled  
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet  
Her panting bosom : . . . she drew back a while,  
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,  
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry  
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.  
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night  
Involved and swallowed up the vision ; sleep,  
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,  
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock he started from his trance—  
The cold white light of morning, the blue moon  
Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,  
The distinct valley and the vacant woods,  
Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled

The hues of heaven that canopied his bower  
Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,  
The mystery and the majesty of Earth,  
The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes  
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly  
As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.  
The spirit of sweet human love has sent  
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned  
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues  
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;  
He overleaps the bound. Alas! alas!  
Were limbs, and breath, and being intertwined  
Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost,  
In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,  
That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death  
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,  
O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,  
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,  
Lead only to a black and watery depth,  
While death's blue vault, with loathliest vapours hung,  
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales  
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,  
Conduct, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?  
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart,  
The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung  
His brain even like despair.

While day-light held

The sky, the Poet kept mute conference  
With his still soul. At night the passion came,  
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,  
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth  
Into the darkness.—As an eagle grasped

In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast  
Burn with the poison, and precipitates  
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,  
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight  
O'er the wide æry wilderness : thus driven  
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,  
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,  
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,  
Startling with careless step the moon-light snake,  
He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,  
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues  
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on  
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep  
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud ;  
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs  
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind  
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,  
Day after day, a weary waste of hours,  
Bearing within his life the brooding care  
That ever fed on its decaying flame.  
And now his limbs were lean ; his scattered hair  
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering  
Sung dirges in the wind ; his listless hand  
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin ;  
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone  
As in a furnace burning secretly  
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,  
Who ministered with human charity  
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe  
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,  
Encountering on some dizzy precipice  
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind  
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet

Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused  
In its career : the infant would conceal  
His troubled visage in his mother's robe  
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,  
To remember their strange light in many a dream  
Of after-times ; but youthful maidens, taught  
By nature, would interpret half the woe  
That wasted him, would call him with false names  
Brother, and friend, would press his pallid hand  
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path  
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore  
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste  
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged  
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there,  
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.  
It rose as he approached, and with strong wings  
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course  
High over the immeasurable main.  
His eyes pursued its flight.—“Thou hast a home,  
Beautiful bird ; thou voyagest to thine home,  
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck  
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes  
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.  
And what am I that I should linger here,  
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,  
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned  
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers  
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven  
That echoes not my thoughts ?” A gloomy smile  
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.  
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly

Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,  
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,  
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts he looked around.  
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight  
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.  
A little shallop floating near the shore  
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.  
It had been long abandoned, for its sides  
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints  
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.  
A restless impulse urged him to embark  
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste ;  
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves  
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny, sea and sky  
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind  
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.  
Following his eager soul, the wanderer  
Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft  
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,  
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea  
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

As one that in a silver vision floats  
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds  
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly  
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled  
The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on  
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,  
Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.  
The waves arose. Higher and higher still

Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's  
scourge

Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.  
Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war  
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast  
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven  
With dark obliterating course, he sate :  
As if their genii were the ministers  
Appointed to conduct him to the light  
Of those belovèd eyes, the Poet sate  
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on,  
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues  
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray  
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep ;  
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,  
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks  
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day ;  
Night followed, clad with stars. On every side  
More horribly the multitudinous streams  
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war  
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock  
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat  
Still fled before the storm ; still fled, like foam  
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river ;  
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave ;  
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass  
That fell, convulsing ocean : safely fled —  
As if that frail and wasted human form,  
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight

The moon arose : and lo ! the ethereal cliffs  
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone

Among the stars like sunlight, and around  
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves  
Bursting and eddying irresistibly  
Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall save?—  
The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent drove,  
The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,  
The shattered mountain overhung the sea,  
And faster still, beyond all human speed,  
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,  
The little boat was driven. A cavern there  
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths  
Ingulphed the rushing sea. The boat fled on  
With unrelaxing speed.—“Vision and Love!”  
The Poet cried aloud, “I have beheld  
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death  
Shall not divide us long!”

The boat pursued

The windings of the cavern. Day-light shone  
At length upon that gloomy river's flow;  
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves  
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream  
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,  
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,  
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell  
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound  
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass  
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;  
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,  
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved  
With alternating dash the knarlèd roots  
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms  
In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,

Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud,  
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.  
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,  
With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,  
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,  
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,  
Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,  
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot  
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides  
Is left, the boat paused shuddering.—Shall it sink  
Down the abyss?—Shall the reverting stress  
Of that resistless gulph embosom it?  
Now shall it fall?—A wandering stream of wind,  
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,  
And, lo! with gentle motion, between banks  
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,  
Beneath a woven grove it sails, and, hark!  
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar,  
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.  
Where the embowering trees recede, and leave  
A little space of green expanse, the cove  
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers  
For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,  
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave  
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,  
Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,  
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay  
Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed  
To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,  
But on his heart its solitude returned,  
And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid  
In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame  
Had yet performed its ministry: it hung



Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud  
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods  
Of night close over it.

The noonday sun

Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass  
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence  
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,  
Scooped in the dark base of their æry rocks  
Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever.  
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves  
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led  
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,  
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank,  
Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark  
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,  
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,  
Embraces the light beech. The pyramids  
Of the tall cedar overarching, frame  
Most solemn domes within, and far below,  
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,  
The ash and the acacia floating hang  
Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed  
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,  
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around  
The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,  
With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,  
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,  
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs  
Uniting their close union; the woven leaves  
Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,  
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable  
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns

Beneath these canopies extend their swells,  
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms  
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen  
Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,  
A soul-dissolving odour, to invite  
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,  
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep  
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,  
Like vaporous shapes half seen ; beyond, a well,  
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,  
Images all the woven boughs above,  
And each depending leaf, and every speck  
Of azure sky, darting between their chasms ;  
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves  
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star  
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,  
Or, painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,  
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,  
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings  
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld  
Their own wan light through the reflected lines  
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth  
Of that still fountain ; as the human heart,  
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,  
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard  
The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung  
Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel  
An unaccustomed presence, and the sound  
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs  
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed  
To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes

Of shadowy bliss or shadowy pain;  
 Remember how bright the future world appears  
 Of grace, of glory, of reward; —  
 But, within my breast, and close to me,  
 And nearer still, and closer yet,  
 How deepening the dark shadows, how spread around me,  
 How common with them, as if he had it  
 Were all that was, — my — — — — —  
 Was raised by former pleasures, — — — — —  
 Two weary eyes hung in the gloom of thought,  
 And turned with vain vision and vain wishes  
 To heaven home.

*Continued in the next*

That vision made me well, he said, pursuing  
 The workings of the soul — The vision  
 Whence and whither, through many a year, I see  
 Remains the future home — Sometimes I feel  
 Among the stars with heaven's harmony  
 Dark and profound — Then on the golden stream  
 It darts, and on the light laughing as it goes  
 Then, through the plain is seen, a distant light,  
 Reflecting every beam and deepening red  
 That glowing on the quiver — O vision!  
 Whence comes it, whence is it, whence  
 Whence do thy mysterious powers come?  
 They brighten my life — Thy dark and shadowy  
 Thy dancing waves, thy vast and boundless depths;  
 Thy secret life beneath, and hidden powers  
 Have each their type in me, and each their way;  
 And measureless realms may be seen in mine  
 What can I do, or what wondering words  
 Contain thy waters, as the universe

Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched  
Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste  
I' the passing wind !”

Beside the grassy shore  
Of the small stream he went ; he did impress  
On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught  
Strong shuddering from his burning limbs: As one  
Roused by some joyous madness from the couch  
Of fever, he did move ; yet, not like him,  
Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame  
Of his frail exultation shall be spent,  
He must descend. With rapid steps he went  
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow  
Of the wild babbling rivulet ; and now  
The forest's solemn canopies were changed  
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.  
Gray rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed  
The struggling brook : tall spires of windlestrae  
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,  
And nought but knarled roots of ancient pines  
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots  
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,  
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,  
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin  
And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes  
Had shone, gleam stony orbs :—so from his steps  
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade  
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds  
And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued  
The stream, that with a larger volume now  
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell ; and there  
Fretted a path through its descending curves

With its wintry speed. On every side now rose  
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,  
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles  
In the light of evening, and its precipice  
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,  
'Mid toppling stones, black gulphs and yawning caves,  
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues  
To the loud stream. Lo ! where the pass expands  
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,  
And seems, with its accumulated crags,  
To overhang the world : for wide expand  
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon  
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,  
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom  
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills  
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge  
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,  
In naked and severe simplicity,  
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,  
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy  
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast  
Yielding one only response, at each pause  
In most familiar cadence, with the howl  
The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams  
Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,  
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,  
Fell into that immeasurable void  
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

Yet the gray precipice and solemn pine  
And torrent, were not all ; one silent nook  
Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,  
Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,

It overlooked in its serenity  
The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars.  
It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile  
Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped  
The fissured stones with its entwining arms,  
And did embower with leaves for ever green,  
And berries dark, the smooth and even space  
Of its inviolated floor, and here  
The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore,  
In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay,  
Red, yellow, or etherially pale,  
Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt  
Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach  
The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,  
One human step alone, has ever broken  
The stillness of its solitude :—one voice  
Alone inspired its echoes ;—even that voice  
Which hither came, floating among the winds,  
And led the loveliest among human forms  
To make their wild haunts the depository  
Of all the grace and beauty that endued  
Its motions, render up its majesty,  
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,  
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,  
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,  
Commit the colours of that varying cheek,  
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

The dim and hornèd moon hung low, and poured  
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge  
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist  
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank  
Wan moonlight even to fulness : not a star

Shone, not a sound was heard ; the very winds,  
Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice  
Slept, clasped in his embrace.—O, storm of death !  
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night :  
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still  
Guiding its irresistible career  
In thy devastating omnipotence,  
Art king of this frail world, from the red field  
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,  
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed  
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,  
A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls  
His brother Death. A rare and regal prey  
He hath prepared, prowling around the world ;  
Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men  
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,  
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine  
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess  
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death  
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,  
Did he resign his high and holy soul  
To images of the majestic past,  
That paused within his passive being now,  
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe  
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place  
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk  
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone  
Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest  
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink  
Of that obscurest chasm ;—and thus he lay,  
Surrendering to their final impulses

The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair,  
The torturers, slept ; no mortal pain or fear  
Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,  
And his own being unalloyed by pain,  
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed  
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there  
At peace, and faintly smiling :—his last sight  
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line  
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,  
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed  
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills  
It rests, and still as the divided frame  
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,  
That ever beat in mystic sympathy  
With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still :  
And when two lessening points of light alone  
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp  
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir  
The stagnate night :—till the minutest ray  
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.  
It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained  
Utterly black, the murky shades involved  
An image, silent, cold, and motionless,  
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.  
Even as a vapour fed with golden beams  
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west  
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—  
No sense, no motion, no divinity—  
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings  
The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream  
Once fed with many-voiced waves—a dream  
Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever,  
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.



O, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,  
Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam  
With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale  
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance ! O, that God,  
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice  
Which but one living man has drained, who now,  
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels  
No proud exemption in the blighting curse  
He bears, over the world wanders for ever,  
Lone as incarnate death ! O, that the dream  
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,  
Raking the cinders of a crucible  
For life and power, even when his feeble hand  
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law  
Of this so lovely world ! But thou art fled  
Like some frail exhalation ; which the dawn  
Robes in its golden beams,—ah ! thou hast fled !  
The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,  
The child of grace and genius. Heartless things  
Are done and said i' the world, and many worms  
And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth  
From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,  
In vesper low or joyous orison,  
Lifts still its solemn voice :—but thou art fled—  
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes  
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee  
Been purest ministers, who are, alas !  
Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips  
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes  
That image sleep in death, upon that form  
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear  
Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues  
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,

Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone  
 In the frail pauses of this simple strain,  
 Let not high verse, mourning the memory  
 Of that which is no more, or painting's woe  
 Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery  
 Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,  
 And all the shews o' the world are frail and vain  
 To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.  
 It is a woe too "deep for tears," when all  
 Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,  
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves  
 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,  
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope :  
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,  
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,  
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

THE TWO SPIRITS.

An Allegory.

FIRST SPIRIT.

O THOU, who plumed with strong desire  
 Wouldst float above the earth, beware !  
 A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire—  
     Night is coming !  
 Bright are the regions of the air,  
 And among the winds and beams  
 It were delight to wander there—  
     Night is coming !

SECOND SPIRIT.

The deathless stars are bright above ;  
 If I would cross the shade of night,  
 Within my heart is the lamp of love,  
     And that is day !  
 And the moon will smile with gentle light  
 On my golden plumes where'er they move ;  
 The meteors will linger round my flight,  
     And make night day.

## FIRST SPIRIT.

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken  
Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain ;  
See, the bounds of the air are shaken—

Night is coming !

The red swift clouds of the hurricane :  
Yon declining sun have overtaken,

The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain—  
Night is coming !

## SECOND SPIRIT.

I see the light, and I hear the sound ;

I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark,  
With the calm within and the light around  
Which makes night day :

And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,  
Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound,  
My moon-like flight thou then may'st mark  
On high, far away.

---

Some say there is a precipice

Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin  
O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice  
'Mid Alpine mountains ;

And that the languid storm pursuing  
That wingèd shape, for ever flies

Round those hoar branches, aye renewing  
Its æry fountains.

Some say when nights are dry and clear,  
And the death-dews sleep on the morass,  
Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller,  
Which make night day :  
And a silver shape like his early love doth pass  
Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,  
And when he awakes on the fragrant grass,  
He finds night day.

1820.

## LINES.

THE cold earth slept below ;  
Above the cold sky shone ;  
And all around,  
With a chilling sound,  
From caves of ice and fields of snow,  
The breath of night like death did flow  
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black,  
The green grass was not seen,  
The birds did rest  
On the bare thorn's breast,  
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,  
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack  
Which the frost had made between.

Thine eyes glowed in the glare  
Of the moon's dying light ;  
As a fen-fire's beam,  
On a sluggish stream,  
Gleams dimly--so the moon shone there,  
And it yellowed the strings of thy tangled hair  
That shook in the wind of night.

The moon made thy lips pale, beloved ;  
The wind made thy bosom chill ;  
The night did shed  
On thy dear head  
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie  
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky  
Might visit thee at will.

1815.

## Poems on Death.

### A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD.

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere  
Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray ;  
And pallid evening twines its beaming hair  
In duskier braids around the languid eyes of day :  
Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men,  
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,  
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea ;  
Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,  
Responding to the charm with its own mystery.  
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass  
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aërial Pile ! whose pinnacles  
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,  
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,  
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,  
Around whose lessening and invisible height  
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres :  
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound  
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,

Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,  
 And mingling with the still night and mute sky  
 Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnised and softened, death is mild  
 And terrorless as this serenest night :  
 Here could I hope, like some enquiring child  
 Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human  
 sight

Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep  
 That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

1815.

## SONNET.

YE hasten to the dead ! What seek ye there,  
 Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes  
 Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear ?  
 O thou quick Heart which pantest to possess  
 All that anticipation feigneth fair !  
 Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess  
 Whence thou didst come, and whither thou mayst go,  
 And that which never yet was known wouldest know—  
 Oh, whither hasten ye that thus ye press  
 With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,  
 Seeking alike from happiness and woe  
 A refuge in the cavern of grey death ?  
 O heart, and mind, and thoughts ! What thing do you  
 Hope to inherit in the grave below ?

1820.



## SONNET.

LIFT not the painted veil which those who live  
Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,  
And it but mimic all we would believe  
With colours idly spread,—behind, lurk Fear  
And Hope, twin destinies; who ever weave  
Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.  
I knew one who had lifted it—he sought,  
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,  
But found them not, alas! nor was there aught  
The world contains, the which he could approve.  
Through the unheeding many he did move,  
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot  
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove  
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

1818?

## PEACE.

THE rude wind is singing  
The dirge of the music dead,  
The cold worms are clinging  
Where kisses were lately fed.

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THE babe is at peace within the womb,  
The corpse is at rest within the tomb,  
We begin in what we end.

## THE DIRGE OF GINEVRA.

OLD winter was gone  
In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,  
And the spring came down  
From the planet that hovers upon the shore  
Where the sea of sunlight encroaches  
On the limits of wintry night ;—  
If the land, and the air, and the sea  
Rejoice not when spring approaches,  
We did not rejoice in thee,  
Ginevra !

She is still, she is cold  
On the bridal couch,  
One step to the white death-bed,  
And one to the bier,  
And one to the charnel—and one, O where ?  
The dark arrow fled  
In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more has rolled  
The rats in her heart  
Will have made their nest,  
And the worms be alive in her golden hair,  
While the spirit that guides the sun,  
Sits throned in his flaming chair,  
She shall sleep.

## THE DIRGE OF BEATRICE.

FALSE friend, wilt thou smile or weep  
When my life is laid asleep?  
Little cares for a smile or a tear,  
The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!  
    Farewell! Heigho!  
    What is this whispers low?  
There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;  
And bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet sleep, were death like to thee,  
Or if thou couldst mortal be,  
I would close these eyes of pain;  
When to wake? Never again.  
    O, World! Farewell!  
    Listen to the passing bell!  
It says, thou and I must part,  
With a light and a heavy heart.

*Cenci.*

## SLEEP AND DEATH.

*They.* WE strew these opiate flowers  
       On thy restless pillow,—  
 They were stript from Orient bowers,  
       By the Indian billow  
       Be thy sleep  
       Calm and deep,  
 Like their's who fell—not ours who weep !

*She.* Away, unlovely dreams !  
       Away, false shapes of sleep !  
 Be his, as Heaven seems,  
       Clear, and bright, and deep !  
 Soft as love, and calm as death,  
 Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

*They.* Sleep, sleep ! our song is laden  
       With the soul of slumber ;  
 It was sung by a Samian maiden,  
       Whose lover was of the number  
       Who now keep  
       That calm sleep  
 Whence none may wake, where none shall weep

*She.* I touch thy temples pale !  
       I breathe my soul on thee !  
 And could my prayers avail,  
       All my joy should be  
 Dead, and I would live to weep,  
 So thou might'st win one hour of quiet sleep.  
*Hellas.*

## “Songs Consecrate to Liberty.”

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### TO WORDSWORTH.

POET of Nature, thou hast wept to know  
That things depart which never may return :  
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,  
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.  
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine  
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.  
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine  
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar :  
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood  
Above the blind and battling multitude :  
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave  
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—  
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,  
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

1815.

## THE SNAKE AND EAGLE.

WHEN the last hope of trampled France had failed  
Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,  
From visions of despair I rose, and scaled  
The peak of an ærial promontory,  
Whose caverned base with the vext surge was hoary;  
And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken  
Each cloud, and every wave :—but transitory  
The calm : for sudden, the firm earth was shaken,  
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.

So as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder  
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,  
When, gathering fast, around, above and under,  
Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,  
Until their complicating lines did steep  
The orient sun in shadow :—not a sound  
Was heard ; one horrible repose did keep  
The forests and the floods, and all around  
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the  
ground.

Hark ! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps  
Earth and the ocean. See ! the lightnings yawn  
Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps  
Glitter and boil beneath : it rages on,  
One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,  
Lightning, and hail, and darkness eddying by.  
There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone  
Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy  
What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven  
That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen  
Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven  
Most delicately, and the ocean green,  
Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,  
Quivered like burning emerald : calm was spread  
On all below ; but far on high, between  
Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,  
Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest  
shed.

For ever, as the war became more fierce  
Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,  
That spot grew more serene ; blue light did pierce  
The woof of those white clouds, which seemed to lie  
Far, deep, and motionless ; while thro' the sky  
The pallid semicircle of the moon  
Past on, in slow and moving majesty ;  
Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon  
But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of  
noon.

I could not choose but gaze ; a fascination  
Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew  
My fancy thither, and in expectation  
Of what I knew not, I remained :—the hue  
Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,  
Suddenly stained with shadow did appear ;  
A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,  
Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere  
Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.

Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,  
Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river  
Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,  
Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth  
    quiver,  
Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour ;  
So, from that chasm of light a wingèd Form  
On all the winds of heaven approaching ever  
Floated, dilating as it came : the storm  
Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and  
    warm.

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,  
Suspending thought and breath ; a monstrous sight !  
For in the air do I behold indeed  
An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight :—  
And now relaxing its impetuous flight,  
Before the aërial rock on which I stood,  
The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,  
And hung with lingering wings over the flood,  
And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,  
And every golden feather gleamed therein—  
Feather and scale inextricably blended.  
The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin  
Shone thro' the plumes its coils were twined within  
By many a swollen and knotted fold. and high  
And far, the neck receding lithe and thin,  
Sustained a crested head, which warily  
Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's stedfast eye.



Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling  
 With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed  
 Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing  
 Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,  
 Drooped thro' the air; and still it shrieked and  
     wailed,  
 And casting back its eager head, with beak  
 And talon unremittingly assailed  
 The wreathèd Serpent, who did ever seek  
 Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

What life what power was kindled and arose  
 Within the sphere of that appalling fray!  
 For, from the encounter of those wondrous foes,  
 A vapour like the sea's suspended spray  
 Hung gathered: in the void air, far away,  
 Floated the shattered plumes; bright scales did  
     leap,  
 Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,  
 Like sparks into the darkness;—as they sweep,  
 Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,  
 And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;  
 Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck  
 Locked in stiff rings his adamant coil,  
 Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,  
 Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea  
 Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil  
 His adversary, who then reared on high  
 His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

Then on the white edge of the bursting surge,  
 Where they had sank together, would the Snake  
 Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge  
 The wind with his wild writhings ; for to break  
 That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake  
 The strength of his unconquerable wings  
 As in despair, and with his sinewy neck,  
 Dissolve in sudden shock those linkèd rings,  
 Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

While baffled while, and strength encountered strength,  
 Thus long, but unprevailing :—the event  
 Of that portentous fight appeared at length :  
 Until the lamp of day was almost spent  
 It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,  
 Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last  
 Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent,  
 With clang of wings and scream the Eagle past,  
 Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive  
 With its oppressors in a strife of blood,  
 Or when free thoughts, like lightnings are alive ;  
 And in each bosom of the multitude  
 Justice and truth, with custom's hydra brood  
 Wage silent war ;—when priests and kings dis-  
     semble  
 In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,  
 When round pure hearts, a host of hopes assemble,  
 The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations  
     tremble !

*Revolt of Islam, canto i. 1817.*

## THE MASK OF ANARCHY.

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE MASSACRE AT  
MANCHESTER.

As I lay asleep in Italy  
There came a voice from over the Sea,  
And with great power it forth led me  
To walk in the visions of Poesy.

I met Murder on the way—  
He had a mask like Castlereagh—  
Very smooth he looked, yet grim ;  
Seven blood-hounds followed him :

All were fat ; and well they might  
Be in admirable plight,  
For one by one, and two by two,  
He tossed them human hearts to chew  
Which from his wide cloak he drew.

Next came Fraud, and he had on,  
Like Lord E., an ermined gown ;  
His big tears, for he wept well,  
Turned to mill-stones as they fell.

And the little children, who  
Round his feet played to and fro,  
Thinking every tear a gem,  
Had their brains knocked out by them.

Clothed with the Bible, as with light,  
And the shadows of the night,  
Like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy  
On a crocodile rode by.

And many more Destructions played  
In this ghastly masquerade,  
All disguised, even to the eyes,  
Like Bishops, lawyers, peers or spies.

Last came Anarchy : he rode  
On a white horse, splashed with blood ;  
He was pale even to the lips,  
Like Death in the Apocalypse.

And he wore a kingly crown ;  
And in his grasp a sceptre shone ;  
On his brow this mark I saw—  
“ I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW ! ”

With a pace stately and fast,  
Over English land he past,  
Trampling to a mire of blood  
The adoring multitude.

And a mighty troop around,  
With their trampling shook the ground,  
Waving each a bloody sword,  
For the service of their Lord.

And with glorious triumph, they  
Rode thro' England proud and gay,  
Drunk as with intoxication  
Of the wine of desolation.

O'er fields and towns, from sea to sea,  
Past the Pageant swift and free,  
Tearing up, and trampling down ;  
Till they came to London town.

And each dweller, panic-stricken,  
Felt his heart with terror sicken  
Hearing the tempestuous cry  
Of the triumph of Anarchy.

For with pomp to meet him came,  
Clothed in arms like blood and flame,  
The hired murderers, who did sing  
"Thou art God, and Law, and King.

"We have waited, weak and lone  
For thy coming, Mighty One !  
Our purses are empty, our swords are cold,  
Give us glory, and blood, and gold."

Lawyers and priests, a motley crowd,  
To the earth their pale brows bowed ;  
Like a bad prayer not over loud,  
Whispering—"Thou art Law and God."—

Then all cried with one accord,  
"Thou art King, and God, and Lord ;  
Anarchy, to thee we bow,  
Be thy name made holy now !"

And Anarchy, the Skeleton,  
Bowed and grinned to every one,  
As well as if his education  
Had cost ten millions to the nation.

For he knew the Palaces  
Of our Kings were nightly his ;  
His the sceptre, crown, and globe,  
And the gold-inwoven robe.

So he sent his slaves before  
To seize upon the Bank and Tower,  
And was proceeding with intent  
To meet his pensioned Parliament

When one fled past, a maniac maid,  
And her name was Hope, she said :  
But she looked more like Despair,  
And she cried out in the air :

“ My father Time is weak and grey  
With waiting for a better day ;  
See how idiot-like he stands,  
Fumbling with his palsied hands !

“ He has had child after child,  
And the dust of death is piled  
Over every one but me—  
Misery, oh, Misery !”

Then she lay down in the street,  
Right before the horses' feet,  
Expecting, with a patient eye,  
Murder, Fraud and Anarchy.

When between her and her foes  
A mist, a light, an image rose,  
Small at first, and weak, and frail  
Like the vapour of a vale :

Till as clouds grow on the blast,  
Like tower-crowned giants striding fast,  
And glare with lightnings as they fly,  
And speak in thunder to the sky,

It grew—a Shape arrayed in mail  
Brighter than the viper's scale,  
And upborne on wings whose grain  
Was as the light of sunny rain.

On its helm, seen far away,  
A planet, like the Morning's, lay ;  
And those plumes its light rained thro'  
Like a shower of crimson dew.

With step as soft as wind it past  
O'er the heads of men—so fast  
That they knew the presence there,  
And looked,—and all was empty air.

As flowers beneath May's footstep waken,  
As stars from Night's loose hair are shaken,  
As waves arise when loud winds call,  
Thoughts sprung where'er that step did fall.

And the prostrate multitude  
Looked—and ankle-deep in blood,  
Hope, that maiden most serene,  
Was walking with a quiet mien :

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,  
Lay dead earth upon the earth ;  
The Horse of Death tameless as wind  
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind  
To dust, the murderers thronged behind.

A rushing light of clouds and splendour,  
A sense awakening and yet tender  
Was heard and felt—and at its close  
These words of joy and fear arose

As if their own indignant Earth  
Which gave the sons of England birth  
Had felt their blood upon her brow,  
And shuddering with a mother's throe

Had turnèd every drop of blood  
By which her face had been bedewed  
To an accent unwithstood,—  
As if her heart had cried aloud :

“Men of England, heirs of Glory,  
Heroes of unwritten story,  
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,  
Hopes of her, and one another ;

“Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number—  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you—  
Ye are many—they are few.”



## SONG

TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND.

MEN of England, wherefore plough  
For the lords who lay ye low?  
Wherefore weave with toil and care  
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,  
From the cradle to the grave,  
Those ungrateful drones who would  
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge  
Many a weapon, chain and scourge,  
That these stingless drones may spoil  
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,  
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?  
Or what is it ye buy so dear  
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;  
The wealth ye find, another keeps;  
The robes ye weave, another wears;  
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap;  
Find wealth,—let no impostor heap;  
Weave robes,—let not the idle wear;  
Forge arms,—in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells ;  
In halls ye deck another dwells.

Why shake the chains ye wrought ? Ye see  
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,  
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,  
And weave your winding sheet, till fair  
England be your sepulchre.

1819.

### SONNET :

ENGLAND IN 1819.

AN old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—  
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—  
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,  
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,  
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—  
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—  
An army, which liberticide and prey  
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield  
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay ;  
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed ;  
A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—  
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may  
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

## SONNET :

## POLITICAL GREATNESS.

NOR happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,  
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,  
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame ;  
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,  
History is but the shadow of their shame,  
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts  
As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,  
Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery  
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit  
By force or custom ? Man who man would be,  
Must rule the empire of himself ; in it  
Must be supreme, establishing his throne  
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy  
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

1821.

## ODE TO LIBERTY.

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner torn but flying,  
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.

BYRON.

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again :

The lightning of the nations, Liberty,  
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,  
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,  
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,  
And, in the rapid plumes of song,  
Clothed itself, sublime and strong ;  
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,  
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey ;  
Till from its station in the heaven of fame  
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray  
Of the remotest sphere of living flame  
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,  
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came  
A voice out of the deep : I will record the same.

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth :

The burning stars of the abyss were hurled  
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,  
That island in the ocean of the world,  
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air :

But this divinest universe

Was yet a chaos and a curse,  
For thou wert not : but power from worst producing  
worse,

The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,  
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,  
And there was war among them, and despair  
Within them, raging without truce or terms :  
The bosom of their violated nurse  
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms  
on worms,  
And men on men ; each heart was as a hell of storms.

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied  
His generations under the pavilion  
Of the Sun's throne : palace and pyramid,  
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million,  
Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.  
This human living multitude  
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,  
For thou wert not ; but o'er the populous solitude,  
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves  
Hung Tyranny ; beneath, sate deified  
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves ;  
Into the shadow of her pinions wide  
Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood,  
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,  
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,  
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves  
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles  
Of favouring heaven : from their enchanted caves  
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.  
On the unapprehensive wild  
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,  
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled ;

And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,  
 Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,  
 Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,  
 Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein  
 Of Parian stone ; and yet a speechless child,  
 Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain  
 Her lidless eyes for thee ; when o'er the Ægean main

Athens arose : a city such as vision  
 Builds from the purple crags and silver towers  
 Of battlemented cloud, as in derision  
 Of kingliest masonry : the ocean-floors  
 Pave it ; the evening sky pavilions it ;  
 Its portals are inhabited  
 By thunder-zonèd winds, each head  
 Within its cloudy wings with sunfire garlanded,  
 A divine work ! Athens diviner yet  
 Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will  
 Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set ;  
 For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill  
 Peopled with forms that mock the eternal dead  
 In marble immortality, that hill  
 Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river  
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay  
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever  
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away !  
 The voices of thy bards and sages thunder  
 With an earth-awakening blast  
 Through the caverns of the past ;  
 Religion veils her eyes ; Oppression shrinks aghast :

A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,  
Which soars where Expectation never flew,  
Rending the veil of space and time asunder !  
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew ;  
One sun illumines heaven ; one spirit vast  
With life and love makes chaos ever new,  
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,  
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmæan Mænad,  
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest  
From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd ;  
And many a deed of terrible uprightness  
By thy sweet love was sanctified ;  
And in thy smile, and by thy side,  
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.  
But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,  
And gold profaned thy capitolian throne,  
Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,  
The senate of the tyrants : they sunk prone  
Slaves of one tyrant : Palatinus sighed  
Faint echoes of Ionian song ; that tone  
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,  
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,  
Or utmost islet inaccessible,  
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,  
Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,  
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,  
To talk in echoes sad and stern,  
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?

For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks  
 Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.  
 What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks  
 Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not  
 weep,

When from its sea of death to kill and burn,  
 The Galilean serpent forth did creep,  
 And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?

And then the shadow of thy coming fell

On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:

And many a warrior-peopled citadel,

Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,

Arose in sacred Italy,

Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea

Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned  
 majesty;

That multitudinous anarchy did sweep,

And burst around their walls, like idle foam,

Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep

Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb

Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,

With divine wand traced on our earthly home

Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome.

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror

Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,

Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,

As light may pierce the clouds when they dis sever

In the calm regions of the orient day!

Luther caught thy wakening glance,

Like lightning, from his leaden lance

Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance



In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay ;  
And England's prophets hailed thee as their  
queen,

In songs whose music cannot pass away,  
Though it must flow for ever : not unseen  
Before the spirit-sighted countenance  
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene  
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

The eager hours and unreluctant years  
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,  
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,  
Darkening each other with their multitude,  
And cried aloud, Liberty ! Indignation  
Answered Pity from her cave ;  
Death grew pale within the grave,  
And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save !  
When like heaven's sun girt by the exhalation  
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,  
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation  
Like shadows : as if day had cloven the skies  
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,  
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,  
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

Thou heaven of earth ! what spells could pall thee then,  
In ominous eclipse ? a thousand years  
Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,  
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,  
Till thy sweet stars could wipe the stain away ;  
How like Bacchanals of blood  
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood  
Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred  
brood !

When one, like them, but mightier far than they,  
 The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers  
 Rose : armies mingled in obscure array,  
 Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred  
       bowers

Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,  
 Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,  
 Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral  
       towers.

England yet sleeps : was she not called of old ?  
 Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder  
 Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold  
 Snow-crag by its reply are cloven in sunder :  
 O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle  
       From Pithecusa to Pelorus

Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus :  
 • They cry, Be dim ; ye lamps of heaven suspended  
       o'er us.

Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile  
 And they dissolve ; but Spain's were links of steel,  
 Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.

Twins of a single destiny ! appeal  
 To the eternal years enthroned before us,  
 In the dim West ; impress us from a seal,  
 All ye have thought and done ! Time cannot dare  
       conceal.

Tomb of Arminius ! render up thy dead,  
 Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,  
 His soul may stream over the tyrant's head ;  
 Thy victory shall be his epitaph,  
 Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,

King-deluded Germany,  
His dead spirit lives in thee.

Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!  
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine  
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!  
Thou island of eternity! thou shrine  
Where desolation clothed with loveliness,  
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,  
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress  
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces

O, that the free would stamp the impious name  
Of King into the dust! or write it there,  
So that this blot upon the page of fame  
Were as a serpent's path, which the light air  
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!  
Ye the oracle have heard:  
Lift the victory-flashing sword,  
And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,  
Which weak itself as stubble, yet can bind  
Into a mass, irrefragably firm,  
The axes and the rods which awe mankind;  
The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm  
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred;  
Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,  
To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant worm.

O, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle  
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,  
That the pale name of Priest might shrink and  
dwindle  
Into the hell from which it first was hurled,  
A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;

Till human thoughts might kneel alone  
 Each before the judgment-throne  
 Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown !  
 O, that the words which make the thoughts obscure  
 From which they spring, as clouds of glimmer-  
 ing dew  
 From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture,  
 Were stript of their thin masks and various hue  
 And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,  
 Till in the nakedness of false and true  
 They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due.

He who taught men to vanquish whatsoever  
 Can be between the cradle and the grave  
 Crowned him the King of Life. O vain endeavour !  
 If on his own high will a willing slave,  
 He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.  
 What if earth can clothe and feed  
 Amplest millions at their need,  
 And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?  
 O, what if Art, an ardent intercessor,  
 Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,  
 Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,  
 And cries : Give me, thy child, dominion  
 Over all height and depth ? if Life can breed  
 New wants, and wealth from those who toil and  
 groan  
 Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousand fold for one.

Come Thou, but lead out of the inmost cave  
 Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star  
 Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,  
 Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car

Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame ;  
 Comes she not, and come ye not,  
 Rulers of eternal thought,  
 To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot?  
 Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame  
 Of what has been, the Hope of what will be ?  
 O, Liberty ! if such could be thy name  
 Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee :  
 If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought  
 By blood or tears, have not the wise and free  
 Wept tears, and blood like tears ? The solemn  
 harmony

Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing  
 To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn ;  
 Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging  
 Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,  
 Sinks headlong through the aërial golden light  
 On the heavy sounding plain,  
 When the bolt has pierced its brain ;  
 As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain ;  
 As a far taper fades with fading night,  
 As a brief insect dies with dying day,  
 My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,  
 Drooped ; o'er it closed the echoes far away  
 Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,  
 As waves which lately paved his watery way  
 Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous  
 play.

1820.

## Poems on Time and its Changes.

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### OZYMANDIAS.

I MET a traveller from an antique land  
Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed :  
And on the pedestal these words appear :  
“ My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair ! ”  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

# TIME.

UNFATHOMABLE Sea ! whose waves are years,  
 Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe  
 Are brackish with the salt of human tears !

Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow  
 Claspest the limits of mortality !  
 And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,  
 Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore ;  
 Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,  
 Who shall put forth on thee,  
 Unfathomable Sea ?

1821.

# THE SEASONS.

THE blasts of Autumn drive the wingèd seeds  
 Over the earth,—next come the snows, and rain,  
 And frosts, and storms, which dreary Winter leads  
 Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train ;

Behold ! Spring sweeps over the world again,  
 Shedding soft dews from her ætherial wings :

Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,  
 And music on the waves and woods she flings,  
 And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

O Spring! of hope and love and youth and gladness  
 Wind-wingèd emblem! brightest, best, and fairest!  
 Whence comest thou, when, with dark Winter's  
     sadness  
 The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest;  
 Sister of joy, thou art the child who wearest  
 Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet;  
 Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou bearest  
 Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet  
 Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding-sheet.

*Revolt of Islam,*  
 Canto ix.

### SPRING.

'Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings  
 From slumber, as a spherèd angel's child,  
 Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,  
 Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems—  
 So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,  
 The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove  
 Waxed green—and flowers burst forth like starry  
     beams :—

The grass in the warm sun did start and move,  
 And sea-buds burst beneath the waves serene :—  
 How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen  
 In any mirror—or the spring's young minions,  
 The wingèd leaves amid the copses green ;—



How many a spirit then puts on the pinions  
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,  
And his own steps—and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,  
More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below,  
When winter and despondency are past.

*Prince Athanase. 1817.*

## JUNE.

IT was the azure time of June,  
When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,  
And the warm and fitful breezes shake  
The fresh green leaves of the hedgerow briar,  
And there were odours then to make  
The very breath we did respire

A liquid element, whereon  
Our spirits, like delighted things  
That walk the air on subtle wings,  
Floated and mingled far away,  
Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.  
And when the evening star came forth

Above the curve of the new-bent moon,  
And light and sound ebbed from the earth,  
Like the tide of the full and weary sea  
To the depths of its own tranquillity,  
Our natures to its own repose

Did the Earth's breathless sleep attune.

*Rosalind and Helen.*

## SUMMER AND WINTER.

It was a bright and cheerful afternoon,  
 Towards the end of the sunny month of June,  
 When the north wind congregates in crowds  
 The floating mountains of the silver clouds  
 From the horizon—and the stainless sky  
 Opens beyond them like eternity.  
 All things rejoiced beneath the sun ; the weeds,  
 The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds ;  
 The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze  
 And the firm foliage of the larger trees.

It was a winter such as when birds die  
 In the deep forests ; and the fishes lie  
 Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes  
 Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes  
 A wrinkled clod as hard as brick ; and when,  
 Among their children, comfortable men  
 Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold :  
 Alas then for the homeless beggar old !

1820.

AUTUMN.

A DIRGE.

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,  
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are  
dying,

And the year  
On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves  
dead,

Is lying.  
Come, months, come away,  
From November to May,  
In your saddest array ;  
Follow the bier  
Of the dead cold year,  
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

The chill rain is falling, the nipt worm is crawling,  
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling

For the year ;  
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each  
gone

To his dwelling ;  
Come, months, come away ;  
Put on white, black, and grey ;  
Let your light sisters play—  
Ye, follow the bier  
Of the dead cold year,  
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

## DIRGE FOR THE YEAR.

ORPHAN hours, the year is dead,  
 Come and sigh, come and weep !  
 Merry hours, smile instead,  
 For the year is but asleep.  
 See, it smiles as it is sleeping,  
 Mocking your untimely weeping.

As an earthquake rocks a corpse  
 In its coffin in the clay,  
 So White Winter, that rough nurse,  
 Rocks the death-cold year to-day ;  
 Solemn hours ! wail aloud  
 For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways  
 The tree-swung cradle of a child,  
 So the breath of these rude days  
 Rocks the year :—be calm and mild,  
 Trembling hours, she will arise  
 With new love within her eyes.

January grey is here,  
 Like a sexton by her grave ;  
 February bears the bier,  
 March with grief doth howl and rave,  
 And April weeps—but, O, ye hours,  
 Follow with May's fairest flowers.

## MUTABILITY.

THE flower that smiles to-day  
     To-morrow dies ;  
 All that we wish to stay  
     Tempts and then flies.  
 What is this world's delight ?  
 Lightning that mocks the night,  
     Brief even as bright.

Virtue, how frail it is !  
     Friendship how rare !  
 Love, how it sells poor bliss  
     For proud despair !  
 But we, though soon they fall,  
 Survive their joy, and all  
     Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,  
     Whilst flowers are gay,  
 Whilst eyes that change ere night  
     Make glad the day ;  
 Whilst yet the calm hours creep,  
 Dream thou—and from thy sleep  
     Then wake to weep.

## TO-MORROW.

WHERE art thou, beloved To-morrow?  
 When young and old and strong and weak,  
 Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,  
 Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,—  
 In thy place—ah! well-a-day!  
 We find the thing we fled—To-day.

1821.

## LINES.

IF I walk in Autumn's even  
 While the dead leaves pass,  
 If I look on Spring's soft heaven,—  
 Something is not there which was.  
 Winter's wondrous frost and snow,  
 Summer's clouds, where are they now?

1821.

## THE PAST.

WILT thou forget the happy hours  
 Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,  
 Heaping over their corpses cold  
 Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould?  
     Blossoms which were the joys that fell,  
     And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

Forget the dead, the past? O yet  
 There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,  
 Memories that make the heart a tomb,  
 Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,  
     And with ghastly whispers tell  
     That joy, once lost, is pain.

1818.

## TIME LONG PAST.

LIKE the ghost of a dear friend dead  
     Is time long past.  
 A tone which is now forever fled,  
 A hope which is now forever past,  
 A love so sweet it could not last,  
     Was time long past.

There were sweet dreams in the night  
     Of time long past:  
 And, was it sadness or delight,  
 Each day a shadow onward cast  
 Which made us wish it yet might last—  
     That time long past.

There is regret, almost remorse,  
                                     For time long past.  
 'Tis like a child's belovèd corse  
 A father watches, till at last  
 Beauty is like remembrance cast  
                                     From time long past.

1820.

## LINES.

THAT time is dead for ever, child,  
 Drowned, frozen, dead for ever !  
       We look on the past  
       And stare aghast  
 At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,  
 Of hopes which thou and I beguiled  
       To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by ;  
 Its waves are unreturning ;  
       But we yet stand  
       In a lone land,  
 Like tombs to mark the memory  
 Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee  
 In the light of life's dim morning.

1817.



## Songs of Love.



### LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY.

THE fountains mingle with the river,  
And the rivers with the ocean ;  
The winds of heaven mix for ever  
With a sweet emotion ;  
Nothing in the world is single ;  
All things by a law divine  
In one another's being mingle ;—  
Why not I with thine ?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,  
And the waves clasp one another ;  
No sister flower would be forgiven,  
If it disdained its brother ;  
And the sunlight clasps the earth,  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea :  
What are all these kissings worth,  
If thou kiss not me ?

## FROM THE ARABIC.

## AN IMITATION.

MY faint spirit was sitting in the light  
Of thy looks, my love ;  
It panted for thee like the hind at noon  
For the brooks, my love.  
Thy barb whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight  
Bore thee far from me ;  
My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,  
Did companion thee.  
  
Ah ! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,  
Or the death they bear,  
The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove  
With the wings of care ;  
In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,  
Shall mine cling to thee,  
Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,  
It may bring to thee.

1821.

## THE INDIAN SERENADE.

I ARISE from dreams of thee  
In the first sweet sleep of night,  
When the winds are breathing low,  
And the stars are shining bright :  
I arise from dreams of thee,  
And a spirit in my feet  
Hath led me—who knows how ?  
To thy chamber window, Sweet !

The wandering airs they faint  
On the dark, the silent stream—  
And the Champak's odours fail  
Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;  
The nightingale's complaint,  
It dies upon her heart ;—  
As I must on thine,  
O ! belovèd as thou art !

O lift me from the grass !  
I die ! I faint ! I fail !  
Let thy love in kisses rain  
On my lips and eyelids pale.  
My cheek is cold and white, alas !  
My heart beats loud and fast ;—  
Oh ! press it close to thine again,  
Where it will break at last.

1819

## TO —

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,  
Thou needest not fear mine ;  
My spirit is too deeply laden  
Ever to burthen thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,  
Thou needest not fear mine ;  
Innocent is the heart's devotion  
With which I worship thine.

1819.

## SONG FOR "TASSO."

I LOVED—alas ! our life is love ;  
But when we cease to breathe and move  
I do suppose love ceases too.  
I thought, but not as now I do,  
Keen thoughts and bright of linkèd lore,  
Of all that men had thought before,  
And all that nature shows, and more.

And still I love and still I think,  
But strangely, for my heart can drink  
The dregs of such despair, and live,  
And love ;  
And if I think, my thoughts come fast,  
I mix the present with the past,  
And each seems uglier than the last.

Sometimes I see before me flee  
A silver spirit's form, like thee,  
O Leonora, and I sit  
Still watching it,  
Till by the grated casement's ledge  
It fades, with such a sigh, as sedge  
Breathes o'er the breezy streamlet's edge.

## LOVE LEFT ALONE.

I LOVED, I love, and when I love no more,  
Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair  
To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me,  
The embodied vision of the brightest dream,  
Which like a dawn heralds the day of life ;  
The shadow of his presence made my world  
A paradise. All familiar things he touched,  
All common words he spoke, became to me  
Like forms and sounds of a diviner world.  
He was as is the sun in his fierce youth,  
As terrible and lovely as a tempest ;  
He came, and went, and left me what I am.

Alas ! Why must I think how oft we two  
Have sate together near the river springs,  
Under the green pavilion which the willow  
Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain,  
Strewn by the nurslings that linger there,  
Over that islet paved with flowers and moss,  
While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson  
snow,  
Showered on us, and the dove mourned in the pine,  
Sad prophetess of sorrows not her own ?  
The crane returned to her unfrozen haunt,  
And the false cuckoo bade the spray good morn ;  
And on a wintry bough the widowed bird,  
Hid in the deepest night of ivy-leaves,  
Renewed the vigils of a sleepless sorrow.

*An Unfinished Drama.* 1822.

## A SONG.

A WIDOW bird sate mourning for her love  
Upon a wintry bough ;  
The frozen wind crept on above,  
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,  
No flower upon the ground,  
And little motion in the air  
Except the mill-wheel's sound.

1822.

## LOVE AND PARTING.

SHE saw me not—she heard me not—alone  
Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood ;  
She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there  
was thrown  
Over her look, the shadow of a mood  
Which only clothes the heart in solitude,  
A thought of voiceless depth ;—she stood alone,  
Above, the Heavens were spread ;—below, the flood  
Was murmuring in its caves ;—the wind had blown  
Her hair apart, thro' which her eyes and forehead  
shone.

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;  
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying  
Grey mists poured forth from the unresting fountains  
Of darkness in the North :—the day was dying :—  
Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying  
Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,  
And on the shattered vapours, which defying  
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly  
In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank  
On either side by the cloud's cleft was made ;  
And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,  
Its waves gushed forth like fire, and as if swayed  
By some mute tempest, rolled on *her* ; the shade  
Of her bright image floated on the river  
Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—  
Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver ;  
Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—  
She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth ;  
Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought  
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,  
Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth  
From common joy ; which, with the speechless  
feeling  
That led her there united, and shot forth  
From her far eyes, a light of deep revealing,  
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath  
 Was now heard there ;—her dark and intricate eyes  
 Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,  
 Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,  
 Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,  
 Burst from her looks and gestures ;—and a light  
 Of liquid tenderness like love, did rise

From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite  
 Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and  
 bright

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame ;  
 Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed  
 On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame  
 Which now the cold winds stole ;—she would have  
 laid

Upon my languid heart her dearest head ;  
 I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet ;  
 Her eyes mingling with mine, might soon have fed  
 My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet  
 I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet !

*Revolt of Islam, Canto xi.*

TO F. G.

HER voice did quiver as we parted,  
 Yet knew I not that heart was broken  
 From which it came, and I departed  
 Heeding not the words then spoken.

Misery—O Misery,

This world is all too wide for thee.

1817.



## FIORDISPINA.

THE season was the childhood of sweet June,  
Whose sunny hours from morning until noon  
Went creeping through the day with silent feet,  
Each with its load of pleasure, slow yet sweet ;  
Like the long years of blest Eternity  
Never to be developed. Joy to thee,  
Fiordispina, and thy Cosimo,  
For thou the wonders of the depth canst know  
Of this unfathomable flood of hours,  
Sparkling beneath the heaven which embowers—

They were two cousins, almost like to twins,  
Except that from the catalogue of sins  
Nature had rased their love—which could not be  
But by dissevering their nativity.  
And so they grew together like two flowers  
Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers  
Lull or awaken in their purple prime,  
Which the same hand will gather—the same clime  
Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see  
All those who love—and who e'er loved like thee,  
Fiordispina? Scarcely Cosimo,  
Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow  
The ardours of a vision which obscure  
The very idol of its portraiture.  
He faints, dissolved into a sea of love ;  
But thou art as a planet sphered above ;  
But thou art Love itself—ruling the motion  
Of his subjected spirit : such emotion  
Must end in sin or sorrow, if sweet May  
Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding-day.

## TO NIGHT.

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,  
    Spirit of Night !  
Out of the misty eastern cave,  
Where all the long and lone daylight,  
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,  
Which make thee terrible and dear,—  
    Swift be thy flight !

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,  
    Star-inwrought !  
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day ;  
Kiss her until she be wearied out,  
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,  
Touching all with thine opiate wand—  
    Come, long sought !

When I arose and saw the dawn,  
    I sighed for thee ;  
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,  
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,  
And the weary Day turned to his rest,  
Lingering like an unloved guest,  
    I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,  
    Wouldst thou me ?  
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,  
    Murmured like a noon-tide bee,  
Shall I nestle near thy side ?  
Wouldst thou me ?—And I replied,  
    No, not thee ?

Death will come when thou art dead,  
    Soon, too soon—  
Sleep will come when thou art fled ;  
Of neither would I ask the boon  
I ask of thee, beloved Night—  
Swift be thine approaching flight,  
    Come soon, soon !

1821.

## A BRIDAL SONG.

THE golden gates of Sleep unbar  
    Where Strength and Beauty met together,  
Kindle their image like a star  
    In a sea of glassy weather.  
Night, with all thy stars look down,—  
    Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,—  
Never smiled the inconstant moon  
    On a pair so true.  
Let eyes not see their own delight ;—  
Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight  
    Oft renew.

Fairies, sprites, and angels keep her !

Holy stars, permit no wrong !

And return to wake the sleeper,

Dawn,—ere it be long !

Oh joy ! oh fear ! what will be done

In the absence of the sun !

Come along !

1821.

# Julian and Maddalo.

## A CONVERSATION.

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### PREFACE.

The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,  
The goats with the green leaves of budding Spring,  
Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.

VIRGIL'S GALLUS.

COUNT MADDALO is a Venetian nobleman of antient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud : he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men ; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentrated and impatient feelings which consume him ; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank, and witty. His

more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication ; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much ; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world, he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy ; and Maddalo takes a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems, by his own account, to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be like many other stories of the same kind : the unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

I RODE one evening with Count Maddalo  
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow  
Of Adria towards Venice : a bare strand  
Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,  
Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,  
Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,  
Is this ; an uninhabited sea-side,  
Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,  
Abandons ; and no other object breaks  
The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes

Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes  
A narrow space of level sand thereon,  
Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down.  
This ride was my delight. I love all waste  
And solitary places ; where we taste  
The pleasure of believing what we see  
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be :  
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore  
More barren than its billows ; and yet more  
Than all, with a remembered friend I love  
To ride as then I rode ;—for the winds drove  
The living spray along the sunny air  
Into our faces ; the blue heavens were bare,  
Stripped to their depths by the awakening north ;  
And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth  
Harmonizing with solitude, and sent  
Into our hearts ærial merriment.  
So, as we rode, we talked ; and the swift thought,  
Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,  
But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours,  
Charged with light memories of remembered hours,  
None slow enough for sadness : till we came  
Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.  
This day had been cheerful but cold, and now  
The sun was sinking, and the wind also.  
Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be  
Talk interrupted with such raillery  
As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn  
The thoughts it would extinguish :—'twas forlorn,  
Yet pleasing, such as once, so poets tell,  
The devils held within the dales of Hell  
Concerning God, freewill and destiny :  
Of all that earth has been or yet may be,

All that vain men imagine or believe,  
Or hope can paint or suffering may achieve,  
We descanted, and I (for ever still  
Is it not wise to make the best of ill?)  
Argued against despondency, but pride  
Made my companion take the darker side.  
The sense that he was greater than his kind  
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind  
By gazing on its own exceeding light.  
Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight,  
Over the horizon of the mountains;—Oh  
How beautiful is sunset, when the glow  
Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee,  
Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy!  
Thy mountains, seas and vineyards and the  
towers  
Of cities they encircle!—it was ours  
To stand on thee, beholding it; and then  
Just where we had dismounted the Count's men  
Were waiting for us with the gondola.—  
As those who pause on some delightful way  
Tho' bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood  
Looking upon the evening and the flood  
Which lay between the city and the shore  
Paved with the image of the sky . . . the hoar  
And æry Alps towards the North appeared  
Thro' mist, an heaven-sustaining bulwark reared  
Between the East and West; and half the sky  
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry  
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew  
Down the steep West into a wondrous hue  
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent  
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent



Among the many folded hills : they were  
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear  
As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles  
The likeness of a clump of peakèd isles—  
And then—as if the earth and Sea had been  
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen  
Those mountains towering as from waves of flame  
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came  
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made  
Their very peaks transparent. “Ere it fade,”  
Said my companion, “I will show you soon  
A better station”—so, o'er the lagoon  
We glided, and from that funereal bark  
I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark  
How from their many isles in evening's gleam  
Its temples and its palaces did seem  
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven.  
I was about to speak, when—“We are even  
Now at the point I meant,” said Maddalo,  
And bade the gondolieri cease to row.  
“Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well  
If you hear not a deep and heavy bell.”  
I looked, and saw between us and the sun  
A building on an island ; such a one  
As age to age might add, for uses vile,  
A windowless, deformed and dreary pile ;  
And on the top an open tower, where hung  
A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung ;  
We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue :  
The broad sun sank behind it, and it tolled  
In strong and black relief—“What we behold  
Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,”  
Said Maddalo, “and ever at this hour

Those who may cross the water, hear that bell  
Which calls the maniacs each one from his cell  
To vespers."—"As much skill as need to pray  
In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they  
To their stern maker," I replied. "O ho!  
You talk as in years past," said Maddalo.  
"'Tis strange men change not. You were ever  
still

Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
A wolf for the meek lambs—if you can't swim  
Beware of Providence." I looked on him,  
But the gay smile had faded in his eye,  
"And such,"—he cried, "is our mortality,  
And this must be the emblem and the sign  
Of what should be eternal and divine!—  
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul  
Hung in a heaven-illuminated tower, must toll  
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below  
Round the rent heart and pray—as madmen do;  
For what? they know not, till the night of death  
As sunset that strange vision, severeth  
Our memory from itself, and us from all  
We sought and yet were baffled." I recall  
The sense of what he said, altho' I mar  
The force of his expressions. The broad star  
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill,  
And the black bell became invisible,  
And the red tower looked grey, and all between  
The churches, ships and palaces were seen  
Huddled in gloom:—into the purple sea  
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.  
We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola  
Conveyed me to my lodging by the way.

The following morn was rainy, cold and dim,  
Ere Maddalo arose, I called on him,  
And whilst I waited with his child I played ;  
A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made,  
A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being,  
Graceful without design and unforeseeing,  
With eyes—Oh speak not of her eyes !—which seem  
Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam  
With such deep meaning, as we never see  
But in the human countenance : with me  
She was a special favourite, I had nursed  
Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first  
To this bleak world ; and she yet seemed to know  
On second sight her antient playfellow,  
Less changed than she was by six months or so ;  
For after her first shyness was worn out  
We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,  
When the Count entered—salutations past ;  
“ The words you spoke last night might well have cast  
A darkness on my spirit—if man be  
The passive thing you say, I should not see  
Much harm in the religions and old saws  
(Tho’ I may never own such leaden laws)  
Which break a teachless nature to the yoke :  
Mine is another faith ”—thus much I spoke  
And noting he replied not, added : “ See  
This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free,  
She spends a happy time with little care  
While we to such sick thoughts subjected are  
As came on you last night—it is our will  
That thus enchains us to permitted ill—  
We might be otherwise—we might be all  
We dream of happy, high, majestic.

Where is the love, beauty and truth we seek  
But in our mind? and if we were not weak  
Should we be less in deed than in desire?"

"Aye, if we were not weak—and we aspire  
How vainly to be strong!" said Maddalo:  
"You talk Utopia." "It remains to know,"  
I then rejoined, "and those who try may find  
How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;  
Brittle perchance as straw . . . We are assured  
Much may be conquered, much may be endured  
Of what degrades and crushes us. We know  
That we have power over ourselves to do  
And suffer—what, we know not till we try;  
But something nobler than to live and die—  
So taught those kings of old philosophy  
Who reigned, before Religion made men blind;  
And those who suffer with their suffering kind  
Yet feel their faith, religion." "My dear friend,"  
Said Maddalo, "my judgment will not bend  
To your opinion, tho' I think you might  
Make such a system refutation-tight  
As far as words go. I knew one like you  
Who to this city came some months ago,  
With whom I argued in this sort, and he  
Is now gone mad,—and so he answered me,—  
Poor fellow! but if you would like to go  
We'll visit him, and his wild talk will shew  
How vain are such aspiring theories."

"I hope to prove the induction otherwise,  
And that a want of that true theory, still,  
Which seeks a 'soul of goodness' in things ill,  
Or in himself or others, has thus bowed  
His being—there are some by nature proud,

Who patient in all else demand but this :  
 To love and be beloved with gentleness ;  
 And being scorned, what wonder if they die  
 Some living death ? this is not destiny  
 But man's own wilful ill."

As thus I spoke

Servants announced the gondola, and we  
 Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea  
 Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.  
 We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands,  
 Fierce yells and howlings and lamentings keen,  
 And laughter where complaint had merrier been,  
 Moans, shrieks, and curses, and blaspheming prayers  
 Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs  
 Into an old court yard. I heard on high,  
 Then, fragments of most touching melody,  
 But looking up saw not the singer there—  
 Through the black bars in the tempestuous air  
 I saw, like weeds on a wrecked palace growing,  
 Long tangled locks flung wildly forth, and flowing,  
 Of those who on a sudden were beguiled  
 Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled  
 Hearing sweet sounds.—Then I : "Methinks there  
 were

A cure of these with patience and kind care,  
 If music can thus move . . . but what is he  
 Whom we seek here ?" "Of his sad history  
 I know but this," said Maddalo, "he came  
 To Venice a dejected man, and fame  
 Said he was wealthy, or he had been so ;  
 Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him  
 woe ;

But he was ever talking in such sort  
As you do—far more sadly—he seemed hurt,  
Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,  
To hear but of the oppression of the strong,  
Or those absurd deceits (I think with you  
In some respects you know) which carry through  
The excellent impostors of this earth  
When they outface detection—he had worth,  
Poor fellow ! but a humourist in his way”—  
“ Alas, what drove him mad ? ” “ I cannot say ;  
A lady came with him from France, and when  
She left him and returned, he wandered then  
About yon lonely isles of desert sand  
Till he grew wild—he had no cash or land  
Remaining,—the police had brought him here—  
Some fancy took him and he would not bear  
Removal ; so I fitted up for him  
Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim,  
And sent him busts and books and urns for flowers  
Which had adorned his life in happier hours,  
And instruments of music—you may guess  
A stranger could do little more or less  
For one so gentle and unfortunate,  
And those are his sweet strains which charm the  
weight  
From madmen’s chains, and make this Hell appear  
A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.”—  
“ Nay, this was kind of you—he had no claim,  
As the world says ”—“ None—but the very same  
Which I on all mankind were I as he  
Fallen to such deep reverse ;—his melody  
Is interrupted—now we hear the din  
Of madmen, shriek on shriek again begin ;

Let us now visit him ; after this strain  
He ever communes with himself again,  
And sees nor hears not any." Having said  
These words we called the keeper, and he led  
To an apartment opening on the sea—  
There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully  
Near a piano, his pale fingers twined  
One with the other, and the ooze and wind  
Rushed thro' an open casement, and did sway  
His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray ;  
His head was leaning on a music book,  
And he was muttering, and his lean limbs shook ;  
His lips were pressed against a folded leaf  
In hue too beautiful for health, and grief  
Smiled in their motions as they lay apart—  
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart  
The eloquence of passion, soon he raised  
His sad meek face and eyes lustrous and glazed  
And spoke—sometimes as one who wrote and  
thought  
His words might move some heart that heeded not  
If sent to distant lands : and then as one  
Reproaching deeds never to be undone  
With wondering self-compassion ; then his speech  
Was lost in grief, and then his words came each  
Unmodulated, cold, expressionless ;  
But that from one jarred accent you might guess  
It was despair made them so uniform :  
And all the while the loud and gusty storm  
Hissed thro' the window, and we stood behind  
Stealing his accents from the envious wind  
Unseen. I yet remember what he said  
Distinctly : such impression his words made.

‘Month after month,’ he cried, ‘to bear this load  
And as a jade urged by the whip and goad  
To drag life on, which like a heavy chain  
Lengthens behind with many a link of pain!—  
And not to speak my grief—O not to dare  
To give a human voice to my despair,  
But live and move, and wretched thing! smile on  
As if I never went aside to groan,  
And wear this mask of falsehood even to those  
Who are most dear—not for my own repose—  
Alas no scorn or pain or hate could be  
So heavy as that falsehood is to me—  
But that I cannot bear more altered faces  
Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,  
More misery, disappointment and mistrust  
To own me for their father . . . Would the dust  
Were covered in upon my body now!  
That the life ceased to toil within my brow!  
And then these thoughts would at the least be fled;  
Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

‘What Power delights to torture us? I know  
That to myself I do not wholly owe  
What now I suffer, tho’ in part I may.  
Alas none strewed sweet flowers upon the way  
Where wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain  
My shadow, which will leave me not again—  
If I have erred, there was no joy in error,  
But pain and insult and unrest and terror;  
I have not as some do, bought penitence  
With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence,  
For then,—if love and tenderness and truth  
Had overlived hope’s momentary youth,



My creed should have redeemed me from repenting,  
But loathèd scorn and outrage unrelenting  
Met love excited by far other seeming  
Until the end was gained . . . as one from dreaming  
Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state  
Such as it is.—

‘O Thou, my spirit’s mate  
Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,  
Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes  
If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see—  
My secret groans must be unheard by thee,  
Thou wouldst weep tears bitter as blood to know  
Thy lost friend’s incommunicable woe.

‘Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed  
In friendship, let me not that name degrade  
By placing on your hearts the secret load  
Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road  
To peace and that is truth, which follow ye !  
Love sometimes leads astray to misery.  
Yet think not tho’ subdued—and I may well  
Say that I am subdued—that the full Hell  
Within me would infect the untainted breast  
Of sacred nature with its own unrest ;  
As some perverted beings think to find  
In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind  
Which scorn or hate have wounded—O how vain !  
The dagger heals not but may rend again . . . .  
Believe that I am ever still the same  
In creed as in resolve, and what may tame  
My heart, must leave the understanding free,  
Or all would sink in this keen agony—

Nor dream that I will join the vulgar cry,  
Or with my silence sanction tyranny,  
Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain  
In any madness which the world calls gain,  
Ambition or revenge or thoughts as stern  
As those which make me what I am, or turn  
To avarice or misanthropy or lust . . . .  
Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust !  
Till then the dungeon may demand its prey,  
And Poverty and Shame may meet and say—  
Halting beside me on the public way—  
That love-devoted youth is our's—let's sit  
Beside him—he may live some six months yet.  
Or the red scaffold, as our country bends,  
May ask some willing victim, or ye friends  
May fall under some sorrow which this heart  
Or hand may share or vanquish or avert ;  
I am prepared : in truth with no proud joy  
To do or suffer aught, as when a boy  
I did devote to justice and to love  
My nature, worthless now ! . . .

‘ I must remove

A veil from my pent mind. 'Tis torn aside !  
O, pallid as Death's dedicated bride,  
Thou mockery which art sitting by my side,  
Am I not wan like thee ? at the grave's call  
I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball  
To greet the ghastly paramour, for whom  
Thou hast deserted me . . . and made the tomb  
Thy bridal bed . . . but I beside your feet  
Will lie and watch ye from my winding sheet—  
Thus . . . wide awake tho' dead . . . yet stay O stay !  
Go not so soon—I know not what I say—

Hear but my reasons . . I am mad, I fear,  
My fancy is o'erwrought . . thou art not here . . .  
Pale art thou, 'tis most true . . but thou art gone,  
Thy work is finished . . . I am left alone!—

. . . . .

'Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast  
Which, like a serpent thou envenomest  
As in repayment of the warmth it lent?  
Didst thou not seek me for thine own content?  
Did not thy love awaken mine? I thought  
That thou wert she who said 'You kiss me not  
Ever, I fear you do not love me now —  
In truth I loved even to my overthrow  
Her, who would fain forget these words: but they  
Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

. . . . .

'You say that I am proud—that when I speak  
My lip is tortured with the wrongs which break  
The spirit it expresses . . . Never one  
Humbled himself before, as I have done!  
Even the instinctive worm on which we tread  
Turns, tho' it wound not—then with prostrate head  
Sinks in the dust and writhes like me—and dies?  
No: wears a living death of agonies!  
As the slow shadows of the pointed grass  
Mark the eternal periods, his pangs pass  
Slow, ever-moving,—making moments be  
As mine seem—each an immortality!

. . . . .

'That you had never seen me—never heard  
 My voice, and more than all had ne'er endured  
 The deep pollution of my loathed embrace—  
 That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face—  
 That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out  
 The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root  
 With mine own quivering fingers, so that ne'er  
 Our hearts had for a moment mingled there  
 To disunite in horror—these were not  
 With thee, like some suppressed and hideous thought  
 Which flits athwart our musings, but can find  
 No rest within a pure and gentle mind . . .  
 Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word  
 And searedst my memory o'er them,—for I heard  
 And can forget not . . . they were ministered  
 One after one, those curses. Mix them up  
 Like self-destroying poisons in one cup,  
 And they will make one blessing which thou ne'er  
 Didst imprecate for, on me,—death.

. . . . .  
 'It were  
 A cruel punishment for one most cruel  
 If such can love, to make that love the fuel  
 Of the mind's hell ; hate, scorn, remorse, despair :  
 But *me*—whose heart a stranger's tear might wear  
 As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone,  
 Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan  
 For woes which others hear not, and could see  
 The absent with the glance of phantasy,  
 And with the poor and trampled sit and weep,  
 Following the captive to his dungeon deep ;  
*Me*—who am as a nerve o'er which do creep

The else unfelt oppressions of this earth,  
And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,  
When all beside was cold—that thou on me  
Shouldst reign these plagues of blistering agony—  
Such curses are from lips once eloquent  
With love's too partial praise—let none relent  
Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name  
Henceforth, if an example for the same  
They seek . . . for thou on me lookedst so, and so—  
And didst speak thus . . . and thus . . . I live to shew  
How much men bear and die not !

. . . . .

‘Thou wilt tell

With the grimace of hate how horrible  
It was to meet my love when thine grew less ;  
Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address  
Such features to love's work . . . this taunt, tho' true,  
(For indeed nature nor in form nor hue  
Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)  
Shall not be thy defence . . . for since thy lip  
Met mine first, years long past, since thine eye kindled  
With soft fire under mine, I have not dwindled  
Nor changed in mind or body, or in aught  
But as love changes what it loveth not  
After long years and many trials.

‘How vain

Are words ! I thought never to speak again,  
Not even in secret,—not to my own heart—  
But from my lips the unwilling accents start,  
And from my pen the words flow as I write,  
Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears . . . my sight

Is dim to see that charactered in vain  
On this unfeeling leaf which burns the brain  
And eats into it . . . blotting all things fair  
And wise and good which time had written there.

‘Those who inflict must suffer, for they see  
The work of their own hearts and this must be  
Our chastisement or recompense—O child!  
I would that thine were like to be more mild  
For both our wretched sakes . . . for thine the most  
Who feelest already all that thou hast lost  
Without the power to wish it thine again;  
And as slow years pass, a funeral train  
Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend  
Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend  
No thought on my dead memory?

. . . . .

‘Alas, love!

Fear me not . . . against thee I would not move  
A finger in despite. Do I not live  
That thou mayest have less bitter cause to grieve?  
I give thee tears for scorn and love for hate;  
And that thy lot may be less desolate  
Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain  
From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain.  
Then, when thou speakest of me, never say  
He could forgive not. Here I cast away  
All human passions, all revenge, all pride;  
I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide  
Under these words like embers, every spark  
Of that which has consumed me—quick and dark

The grave is yawning . . . as its roof shall cover  
My limbs with dust and worms under and over  
So let Oblivion hide this grief . . . the air  
Closes upon my accents, as despair  
Upon my heart—let death upon despair !'

He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile,  
Then rising, with a melancholy smile  
Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept  
A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept  
And muttered some familiar name, and we  
Wept without shame in his society.  
I think I never was impressed so much ;  
The man who were not, must have lacked a touch  
Of human nature . . . then we lingered not,  
Although our argument was quite forgot,  
But calling the attendants, went to dine  
At Maddalo's ; yet neither cheer nor wine  
Could give us spirits, for we talked of him  
And nothing else, till daylight made stars dim ;  
And we agreed his was some dreadful ill  
Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,  
By a dear friend ; some deadly change in love  
Of one vowed deeply which he dreamed not of ;  
For whose sake he, it seemed, had fixed a blot  
Of falsehood on his mind which flourished not  
But in the light of all-beholding truth,  
And having stamped this canker on his youth  
She had abandoned him—and how much more  
Might be his woe, we guessed not—he had  
store  
Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess  
From his nice habits and his gentleness ;

These were now lost . . . it were a grief indeed  
If he had changed one unsustaining reed  
For all that such a man might else adorn  
The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn ;  
For the wild language of his grief was high,  
Such as in measure were called poetry,  
And I remember one remark which then  
Maddalo made. He said : " Most wretched men  
Are cradled into poetry by wrong,  
They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

If I had been an unconnected man  
I, from this moment, should have formed some  
plan  
Never to leave sweet Venice,—for to me  
It was delight to ride by the lone sea ;  
And then, the town is silent—one may write  
Or read in gondolas by day or night,  
Having the little brazen lamp alight,  
Unseen, uninterrupted ; books are there,  
Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair  
Which were twin-born with poetry, and all  
We seek in towns, with little to recall  
Regrets for the green country. I might sit  
In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit  
And subtle talk would cheer the winter night  
And make me know myself, and the firelight  
Would flash upon our faces, till the day  
Might dawn and make me wonder at my stay :  
But I had friends in London too : the chief  
Attraction here, was that I sought relief  
From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought  
Within me—'twas perhaps an idle thought—



But I imagined that if day by day  
I watched him, and but seldom went away,  
And studied all the beatings of his heart  
With zeal, as men study some stubborn art  
For their own good, and could by patience find  
An entrance to the caverns of his mind,  
I might reclaim him from this dark estate :  
In friendships I had been most fortunate—  
Yet never saw I one whom I would call  
More willingly my friend ; and this was all  
Accomplished not ; such dreams of baseless good  
Oft come and go in crowds and solitude  
And leave no trace—but what I now designed  
Made for long years impression on my mind.  
The following morning urged by my affairs  
I left bright Venice.

After many years

And many changes I returned ; the name  
Of Venice, and its aspect was the same ;  
But Maddalo was travelling far away  
Among the mountains of Armenia.  
His dog was dead. His child had now become  
A woman ; such as it has been my doom  
To meet with few, a wonder of this earth  
Where there is little of transcendant worth,  
Like one of Shakespeare's women : kindly she,  
And with a manner beyond courtesy,  
Received her father's friend ; and when I asked  
Of the lorn maniac, she her memory tasked  
And told as she had heard the mournful tale.  
“ That the poor sufferer's health began to fail  
Two years from my departure, but that then  
The lady who had left him, came again.

Her mien had been imperious, but she now  
Looked meek—perhaps remorse had brought her low  
Her coming made him better, and they stayed  
Together at my father's—for I played  
As I remember with the lady's shawl—  
I might be six years old—but after all  
She left him” . . . “Why, her heart must have been  
tough :

How did it end ?” “And was not this enough ?  
They met—they parted”—“Child, is there no more ?”  
“Something within that interval which bore  
The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met :  
Yet if thine agèd eyes disdain to wet  
Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remembered tears,  
Ask me no more, but let the silent years  
Be closed and cèred over their memory  
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie.”  
I urged and questioned still, she told me how  
All happened—but the cold world shall not know.

1818.

## Poems of Nature and Man.



### MONT BLANC.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

THE everlasting universe of things  
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,  
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—  
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs  
The source of human thought its tribute brings  
Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,  
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume  
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,  
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,  
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river  
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—  
Thou many-coloured, many-voicèd vale,  
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail  
Fast cloud shadows and sunbeams : awful scene,  
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down  
From the ice gulphs that gird his secret throne,  
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame  
Of lightning thro' the tempest ;—thou dost lie,

Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,  
Children of elder time, in whose devotion  
The chainless winds still come and ever came  
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging  
To hear—an old and solemn harmony ;  
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep  
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil  
Robes some unsculptured image ; the strange sleep  
Which when the voices of the desert fail  
Wraps all in its own deep eternity ;—  
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,  
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame :  
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,  
Thou art the path of that unresting sound—  
Dizzy Ravine ! and when I gaze on thee  
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange  
To muse on my own separate phantasy,  
My own, my human mind, which passively  
Now renders and receives fast influencings,  
Holding an unremitting interchange  
With the clear universe of things around ;  
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings  
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest  
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,  
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,  
Seeking among the shadows that pass by  
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,  
Some phantom, some faint image ; till the breast  
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !

Some say that gleams of a remoter world  
Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber,  
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber

Of those who wake and live.—I look on high ;  
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled  
The veil of life and death ? or do I lie  
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep  
Spread far around and inaccessibly  
Its circles ? For the very spirit fails,  
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep  
That vanishes among the viewless gales !  
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,  
Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—  
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms  
Pile around it, ice and rock ; broad vales between  
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,  
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread  
And wind among the accumulated steeps ;  
A desert peopled by the storms alone,  
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,  
And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously  
Its shapes are heaped around ! rude, bare, and  
high,  
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene  
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young  
Ruin ? Were these their toys ? or did a sea  
Of fire envelope once this silent snow ?  
None can reply—all seems eternal now.  
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue  
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,  
So solemn, so serene, that man may be  
But for such faith with nature reconciled ;  
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal  
Large codes of fraud and woe ; not understood  
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good  
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams  
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell  
Within the dædal earth ; lightning, and rain,  
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,  
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams  
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep  
Holds every future leaf and flower ;—the bound  
With which from that detested trance they leap ;  
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,  
And that of him and all that his may be ;  
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound  
Are born and die ; revolve, subside and swell.  
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity  
Remote, serene, and inaccessible :  
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,  
On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains  
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep  
Like snakes that watch their prey from their far  
fountains,

- Slow rolling on ; there, many a precipice,  
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power  
Have piled : dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,  
A city of death, distinct with many a tower  
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.  
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin  
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky  
• Rolls its perpetual stream ; vast pines are strewing  
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil  
Branchless and shattered stand ; the rocks, drawn  
down  
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown  
The limits of the dead and living world,  
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place

Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil ;  
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,  
So much of life and joy is lost. The race  
Of man flies far in dread : his work and dwelling  
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,  
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves  
Shine in the rushing torrent's restless gleam,  
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling  
Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,  
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever  
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,  
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high :—the power is there,  
The still and solemn power of many sights,  
And many sounds, and much of life and death.  
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,  
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend  
Upon that Mountain ; none beholds them there,  
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,  
Or the star-beams dart through them :—Winds  
contend

Silently there, and heap the snow with breath  
Rapid and strong, but silently ! Its home  
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes  
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods  
Over the snow. The secret strength of things  
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome  
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !  
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,  
If to the human mind's imaginings  
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?

## THE ALPS AT DAWN.

BENEATH is a wide plain of billowy mist,  
As a lake, paving in the morning sky,  
With azure waves which burst in silver light,  
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on  
Under the curdling winds, and islanding  
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,  
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,  
Dim twilight lawns, and stream-illumined caves,  
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist ;  
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains  
From icy spires of sunlike radiance fling  
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,  
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,  
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water drops.  
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl  
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines  
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,  
Awful as silence. Hark ! the rushing snow !  
The sun-awakened avalanche ! whose mass,  
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there  
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds  
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth  
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,  
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

*Prom. Unbound.*



LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE  
EUGANEAN HILLS.

MANY a green isle needs must be  
In the deep wide sea of misery,  
Or the mariner, worn and wan,  
Never thus could voyage on  
Day and night, and night and day,  
Drifting on his dreary way,  
With the solid darkness black  
Closing round his vessel's track ;  
Whilst above the sunless sky,  
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,  
And behind the tempest fleet  
Hurries on with lightning feet,  
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,  
Till the ship has almost drank  
Death from the o'er-brimming deep ;  
And sinks down, down, like that sleep  
When the dreamer seems to be  
Weltering through eternity ;  
And the dim low line before  
Of a dark and distant shore  
Still recedes, as ever still  
Longing with divided will,  
But no power to seek or shun,  
He is ever drifted on  
O'er the unrepousing wave  
To the haven of the grave.

What, if there no friends will greet ;  
What, if there no heart will meet  
His with love's impatient beat ;  
Wander wheresoe'er he may,  
Can he dream before that day  
To find refuge from distress  
In friendship's smile, in love's caress ?  
Then 'twill wreak him little woe  
Whether such there be or no :  
Senseless is the breast, and cold,  
Which relenting love would fold ;  
Bloodless are the veins and chill  
Which the pulse of pain did fill ;  
Every little living nerve  
That from bitter words did swerve  
Round the tortured lips and brow,  
Are like sapless leaflets now  
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea  
Which tempests shake eternally,  
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,  
Lies a solitary heap,  
One white skull and seven dry bones,  
On the margin of the stones,  
Where a few grey rushes stand,  
Boundaries of the sea and land :  
Nor is heard one voice of wail  
But the sea-mews, as they sail  
O'er the billows of the gale ;  
Or the whirlwind up and down  
Howling, like a slaughtered town,  
When a king in glory rides

Through the pomp of fratricides :  
Those unburied bones around  
There is many a mournful sound ;  
There is no lament for him,  
Like a sunless vapour, dim,  
Who once clothed with life and thought  
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Aye, many flowering islands lie  
In the waters of wide Agony :  
To such a one this morn was led,  
My bark by soft winds piloted :  
'Mid the mountains Euganean  
I stood listening to the pæan,  
With which the legioned rooks did hail  
The sun's uprise majestic ;  
Gathering round with wings all hoar,  
Thro' the dewy mist they soar  
Like grey shades, till the eastern heaven  
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,  
Flecked with fire and azure, lie  
In the unfathomable sky,  
So their plumes of purple grain,  
Starred with drops of golden rain,  
Gleam above the sunlight woods,  
As in silent multitudes  
On the morning's fitful gale  
Thro' the broken mist they sail,  
And the vapours cloven and gleaming  
Follow down the dark steep streaming,  
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,  
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea

The waveless plain of Lombardy,  
Bounded by the vaporous air,  
Islanded by cities fair ;  
Underneath day's azure eyes  
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,  
A peopled labyrinth of walls,  
Amphitrite's destined halls,  
Which her hoary sire now paves  
With his blue and beaming waves.  
Lo ! the sun upsprings behind,  
Broad, red, radiant, half reclined  
On the level quivering line  
Of the waters chrystalline ;  
And before that chasm of light,  
As within a furnace bright,  
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,  
Shine like obelisks of fire,  
Pointing with inconstant motion  
From the altar of dark ocean  
To the sapphire-tinted skies ;  
As the flames of sacrifice  
From the marble shrines did rise,  
As to pierce the dome of gold  
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City, thou hast been  
Ocean's child, and then his queen ;  
Now is come a darker day,  
And thou soon must be his prey,  
If the power that raised thee here  
Hallow so thy watery bier.  
A less drear ruin than than now,  
With thy conquest-branded brow

Stooping to the slave of slaves  
From thy throne, among the waves  
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew  
Flies, as once before it flew,  
O'er thine isles depopulate,  
And all is in its antient state,  
Save where many a palace gate  
With green sea-flowers overgrown  
Like a rock of ocean's own,  
Topples o'er the abandoned sea  
As the tides change sullenly.  
The fisher on his watery way,  
Wandering at the close of day,  
Will spread his sail and seize his oar  
Till he pass the gloomy shore,  
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep  
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,  
Lead a rapid masque of death  
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold  
Quivering through aërial gold,  
As I now behold them here,  
Would imagine not they were  
Sepulchres, where human forms,  
Like pollution-nourished worms  
To the corpse of greatness cling,  
Murdered, and now mouldering :  
But if Freedom should awake  
In her omnipotence, and shake  
From the Celtic Anarch's hold  
All the keys of dungeons cold,  
Where a hundred cities lie

Chained like thee, ingloriously,  
Thou and all thy sister band  
Might adorn this sunny land,  
Twining memories of old time  
With new virtues more sublime ;  
If not, perish thou and they,  
Clouds which stain truth's rising day  
By her sun consumed away,  
Earth can spare ye : while like flowers,  
In the waste of years and hours,  
From your dust new nations spring  
With more kindly blossoming.  
Perish ! let there only be  
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea,  
As the garment of thy sky  
Clothes the world immortally,  
One remembrance, more sublime  
Than the tattered pall of Time,  
Which scarce hides thy visage wan ;—  
That a tempest-cleaving swan  
Of the songs of Albion,  
Driven from his ancestral streams  
By the might of evil dreams,  
Found a nest in thee ; and Ocean  
Welcomed him with such emotion  
That its joy grew his, and sprung  
From his lips like music flung  
O'er a mighty thunder-fit  
Chastening terror :—what though yet  
Poesy's unfailing river,  
Which thro' Albion winds for ever  
Lashing with melodious wave  
Many a sacred Poet's grave,

Mourn its latest nursling fled !  
What though thou with all thy dead  
Scarce can for this fame repay  
Aught thine own,—oh, rather say  
Though thy sins and slaveries foul  
Overcloud a sunlike soul !  
As the ghost of Homer clings  
Round Scamander's wasting springs ;  
As divinest Shakespeare's might  
Fills Avon and the world with light  
Like omniscient power, which he  
Imaged 'mid mortality ;  
As the love from Petrarch's urn,  
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,  
A quenchless lamp, by which the heart  
Sees things unearthly ; so thou art,  
Mighty spirit ; so shall be  
The City that did refuge thee.

Lo, the sun floats up the sky  
Like thought-wingèd Liberty,  
Till the universal light  
Seems to level plain and height ;  
From the sea a mist has spread,  
And the beams of morn lie dead  
On the towers of Venice now,  
Like its glory long ago.  
By the skirts of that grey cloud  
Many-domèd Padua proud  
Stands, a peopled solitude,  
'Mid the harvest shining plain,  
Where the peasant heaps his grain  
In the garner of his foe,

And the milk-white oxen slow  
With the purple vintage strain,  
Heaped upon the creaking wain,  
That the brutal Celt may swill  
Drunken sleep with savage will ;  
And the sickle to the sword  
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,  
Like a weed whose shade is poison,  
Overgrows this region's foison,  
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come  
To destruction's harvest home :  
Men must reap the things they sow,  
Force from force must ever flow,  
Or worse ; but 'tis a bitter woe  
That love or reason cannot change  
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

Padua, thou within whose walls  
Those mute guests at festivals,  
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,  
Played at dice for Ezzelin,  
Till Death cried, " I win, I win !"  
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,  
But Death promised, to assuage her,  
That he would petition for  
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,  
When the destined years were o'er,  
Over all between the Po  
And the eastern Alpine snow,  
Under the mighty Austrian.  
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,  
And since that time, aye, long before,  
Both have ruled from shore to shore,



That incestuous pair, who follow  
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,  
As Repentance follows Crime,  
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,  
Padua, now no more is burning ;  
Like a meteor, whose wild way  
Is lost over the grave of day,  
It gleams betrayed and to betray :  
Once remotest nations came  
To adore that sacred flame,  
When it lit not many a hearth  
On this cold and gloomy earth :  
Now new fires from antique light  
Spring beneath the wide world's might ;  
But their spark lies dead in thee,  
Trampled out by tyranny.  
As the Norway woodman quells,  
In the depth of piny dells,  
One light flame among the brakes,  
While the boundless forest shakes,  
And its mighty trunks are torn  
By the fire thus lowly born :  
The spark beneath his feet is dead,  
He starts to see the flames it fed  
Howling through the darkened sky  
With a myriad tongues victoriously,  
And sinks down in fear : so thou,  
O tyranny, beholdest now  
Light around thee, and thou hearest  
The loud flames ascend, and fearest :  
Grovel on the earth : aye, hide  
In the dust thy purple pride !

Noon descends around me now :  
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,  
When a soft and purple mist  
Like a vaporous amethyst,  
Or an air-dissolvèd star  
Mingling light and fragrance, far  
From the curved horizon's bound  
To the point of heaven's profound,  
Fills the overflowing sky ;  
And the plains that silent lie  
Underneath, the leaves unsodden  
Where the infant frost has trodden  
With his morning-wingèd feet,  
Whose bright print is gleaming yet ;  
And the red and golden vines,  
Piercing with their trellised lines  
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness ;  
The dun and bladed grass no less,  
Pointing from this hoary tower  
In the windless air ; the flower  
Glimmering at my feet ; the line  
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine  
In the south dimly islanded ;  
And the Alps, whose snows are spread  
High between the clouds and sun ;  
And of living things each one ;  
And my spirit which so long  
Darkened this swift stream of song,  
Interpenetrated lie  
By the glory of the sky :  
Be it love, light, harmony,  
Odour, or the soul of all  
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,

Or the mind which feeds this verse  
Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon  
Autumn's evening meets me soon,  
Leading the infantine moon,  
And that one star, which to her  
Almost seems to minister  
Half the crimson light she brings  
From the sunset's radiant springs :  
And the soft dreams of the morn,  
(Which like wingèd winds had borne  
To that silent isle, which lies  
'Mid remembered agonies,  
The frail bark of this lone being,)  
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,  
And its antient pilot, Pain,  
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be  
In the sea of life and agony :  
Other spirits float and flee  
O'er that gulph : even now, perhaps,  
On some rock the wild wave wraps,  
With folded wings they waiting sit  
For my bark, to pilot it  
To some calm and blooming cove,  
Where for me, and those I love,  
May a windless bower be built,  
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,  
In a dell 'mid lawny hills,  
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,

And soft sunshine, and the sound  
Of old forests echoing round,  
And the light and smell divine  
Of all flowers that breathe and shine :  
We may live so happy there,  
That the spirits of the air,  
Envyng us, may even entice  
To our healing paradise  
The polluting multitude ;  
But their rage would be subdued  
By that clime divine and calm,  
And the winds whose wings rain balm  
On the uplifted soul, and leaves  
Under which the bright sea heaves ;  
While each breathless interval  
In their whisperings musical  
The inspirèd soul supplies  
With its own deep melodies,  
And the love which heals all strife  
Circling, like the breath of life,  
All things in that sweet abode  
With its own mild brotherhood :  
They, not it would change ; and soon  
Every sprite beneath the moon  
Would repent its envy vain,  
And the earth grow young again.

*October 1818.*

## THE WORLD'S WANDERERS.

TELL me, thou star, whose wings of light  
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,  
In what cavern of the night  
    Will thy pinions close now?

Tell me, moon, thou pale and grey  
Pilgrim of heaven's homeless way,  
In what depth of night or day  
    Seekest thou repose now?

Weary wind, who wanderest  
Like the world's rejected guest,  
Hast thou still some secret nest  
    On the tree or billow?

1820.

## TO THE MOON.

ART thou pale for weariness  
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,  
Wandering companionless  
Among the stars that have a different birth,—  
And ever changing, like a joyless eye  
That finds no object worth its constancy?

1820.

## STANZAS.

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES.

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,  
The waves are dancing fast and bright,  
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear  
The purple noon's transparent might,  
The breath of the moist earth is light,  
Around its unexpanded buds ;  
Like many a voice of one delight,  
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,  
The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor  
With green and purple seaweeds strown ;  
I see the waves upon the shore,  
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown :  
I sit upon the sands alone,  
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean  
Is flashing round me, and a tone  
Arises from its measured motion,  
How sweet ! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas ! I have nor hope nor health,  
Nor peace within nor calm around,  
Nor that content surpassing wealth  
The sage in meditation found,  
And walked with inward glory crowned—  
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.  
Others I see whom these surround—  
Smiling they live and call life pleasure ;—  
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,  
Even as the winds and waters are ;  
I could lie down like a tired child,  
And weep away the life of care  
Which I have borne and yet must bear,  
Till death like sleep might steal on me,  
And I might feel in the warm air  
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea  
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,  
As I, when this sweet day is gone,  
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,  
Insults with this untimely moan ;  
They might lament—for I am one  
Whom men love not,—and yet regret,  
Unlike this day, which, when the sun  
Shall on its stainless glory set,  
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.  
1818.

#### A FRAGMENT.

YE gentle visitations of calm thought—  
Moods like the memories of happier earth,  
Which come arrayed in thoughts of little worth,  
Like stars in clouds by the weak winds enwrought,  
But that the clouds depart and stars remain,  
While they remain, and ye, alas, depart !

## THE FOREST AT EVENING.

IN silence then they took the way  
Beneath the forest's solitude.  
It was a vast and antique wood,  
Thro' which they took their way ;  
And the grey shades of evening  
O'er that green wilderness did fling  
Still deeper solitude.  
Pursuing still the path that wound  
The vast and knotted trees around  
Thro' which slow shades were wandering,  
To a deep lawny dell they came,  
To a stone seat beside a spring,  
O'er which the columned wood did frame  
A roofless temple, like the fane  
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,  
Man's early race once knelt beneath  
The overhanging deity.  
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,  
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,  
The pale snake, that with eager breath  
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,  
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,  
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,  
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood  
In the light of his own loveliness ;  
And the birds that in the fountain dip  
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship  
Above and round him wheel and hover.  
The fitful wind is heard to stir



One solitary leaf on high ;  
The chirping of the grasshopper  
Fills every pause. There is emotion  
In all that dwells at noontide here :  
Then, thro' the intricate wild wood,  
A maze of life and light and motion  
Is woven. But there is stillness now :  
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now :  
The snake is in his cave asleep ;  
The birds are on the branches dreaming :  
Only the shadows creep :  
Only the glow-worm is gleaming :  
Only the owls and the nightingales  
Wake in this dell when daylight fails,  
And grey shades gather in the woods :  
And the owls have all fled far away  
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,  
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.  
The accustomed nightingale still broods  
On her accustomed bough,  
But she is mute ; for her false mate  
Has fled and left her desolate.

*Rosalind and Helen.*

### ITALY AND SORROW.

Alas ! Italian winds are mild,  
But my bosom is cold—wintry cold—  
When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves,  
Soft music, my poor brain is wild,  
And I am weak like a nursling child  
Though my soul with grief is grey and old.

## THE ZUCCA.

I SAW two little dark-green leaves  
Lifting the light mould at their birth, and then  
I half-remembered my forgotten dream.  
And day by day, green as a gourd in June,  
The plant grew fresh and thick, yet no one knew  
What plant it was ; its stem and tendrils seemed  
Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded  
With azure mail and streaks of woven silver ;  
And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds  
Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel,  
Until the golden eye of the bright flower  
Through the dark lashes of those veined lids,  
Disencumbered of their silent sleep,  
Gazed like a star into the morning light.  
Its leaves were delicate, you almost saw  
The pulses  
With which the purple velvet flower was fed  
To overflow, and like a poet's heart  
Changing bright fancy to sweet sentiment,  
Changed half the light to fragrance. It soon fell,  
And to a green and dewy embryo-fruit  
Left all its treasured beauty. Day by day  
I nursed the plant, and on the double flute  
Played to it on the sunny winter days  
Soft melodies, as sweet as April rain  
On silent leaves, and sang those words in which  
Passion makes Echo taunt the sleeping strings ;  
And I would send tales of forgotten love  
Late into the lone night, and sing wild songs

Of maids deserted in the olden time,  
And weep like a soft cloud in April's bosom  
Upon the sleeping eyelids of the plant,  
So that perhaps it dreamed that Spring was come,  
And crept abroad into the moonlight air,  
And loosened all its limbs, as, noon by noon,  
The sun averted less his oblique beam.

## INDIAN.

And the plant died not in the frost?

## LADY.

It grew ;  
And went out of the lattice which I left  
Half open for it, trailing its quaint spires  
Along the garden and across the lawn,  
And down the slope of moss and through the tufts  
Of wild-flower roots, and stumps of trees o'ergrown  
With simple lichens, and old hoary stones,  
On to the margin of the glassy pool,  
Even to a nook of unblown violets  
And lilies-of-the-valley yet unborn,  
Under a pine with ivy overgrown.  
And there its fruit lay like a sleeping lizard  
Under the shadows ; but when Spring indeed  
Came to unswathe her infants, and the lilies  
Peeped from their bright green marks to wonder at  
This shape of autumn couched in their recess,  
Then it dilated, and it grew until  
One half lay floating on the fountain wave,  
Whose pulse, elapsed in unlike sympathies,  
Kept time

Among the snowy water-lily buds.  
Its shape was such as summer melody  
Of the south wind in spicy vales might give  
To some light cloud bound from the golden dawn  
To fairy isles of evening, and it seemed  
In hue and form that it had been a mirror  
Of all the hues and forms around it and  
Upon it pictured by the sunny beams  
Which, from the bright vibrations of the pool,  
Were thrown upon the rafters and the roof  
Of boughs and leaves, and on the pillared stems  
Of the dark sylvan temple, and reflections  
Of every infant flower and star of moss  
And veined leaf in the azure odorous air.  
And thus it lay in the Elysian calm  
Of its own beauty, floating on the line  
Which, like a film in purest space, divided  
The heaven beneath the water from the heaven  
Above the clouds ; and every day I went  
Watching its growth and wondering ;  
And as the day grew hot, methought I saw  
A glassy vapour dancing on the pool,  
And on it little quaint and filmy shapes,  
With dizzy motion, wheel and rise and fall,  
Like clouds of gnats with perfect lineaments.

*An Unfinished Drama.* 1822.

## TO A SKYLARK.

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit !

Bird thou never wert,

That from heaven, or near it,

Pourest thy full heart

In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher

From the earth thou springest

Like a cloud of fire ;

The blue deep thou wingest,

And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning

Of the sunken sun,

O'er which clouds are brightning,

Thou dost float and run ;

Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even

Melts around thy flight ;

Like a star of heaven,

In the broad day-light

Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows

Of that silver sphere,

Whose intense lamp narrows

In the white dawn clear,

Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air  
With thy voice is loud,  
As, when night is bare,  
From one lonely cloud  
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is  
overflowed.

What thou art we know not ;  
What is most like thee ?  
From rainbow clouds there flow not  
Drops so bright to see,  
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden  
In the light of thought,  
Singing hymns unbidden,  
Till the world is wrought  
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :

Like a high-born maiden  
In a palace tower,  
Soothing her love-laden  
Soul in secret hour  
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden  
In a dell of dew,  
Scattering unbeholden  
Its ærial hue  
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from  
the view :

Like a rose embowered  
In its own green leaves,  
By warm winds deflowered,  
Till the scent it gives  
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd  
thieves :

Sound of vernal showers  
On the twinkling grass,  
Rain-awakened flowers,  
All that ever was  
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass :

Teach us, sprite or bird,  
What sweet thoughts are thine :  
I have never heard  
Praise of love or wine  
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymenæal,  
Or triumphal chaunt,  
Matched with thine would be all  
But an empty vaunt,  
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains  
Of thy happy strain ?  
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?  
What shapes of sky or plain ?  
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance  
Languor cannot be :  
Shadow of annoyance  
Never came near thee :  
Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety

Waking or asleep,  
Thou of death must deem  
Things more true and deep  
Than we mortals dream,  
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not :  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught ;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest  
thought.

Yet if we could scorn  
Hate, and pride, and fear ;  
If we were things born  
Not to shed a tear,  
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures  
Of delightful sound,  
Better than all treasures  
That in books are found,  
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !



Teach me half the gladness

That thy brain must know,

Such harmonious madness

From my lips would flow,

The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

1820.

### THE NIGHTINGALE.

DAYLIGHT on its last purple cloud

Was lingering grey, and soon her strain

The Nightingale began ; now loud,

Climbing in circles the windless sky,

Now dying music ; suddenly

'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,

And now to the hushed ear it floats

Like field smells known in infancy,

Then failing, soothes the air again.

*Rosalind and Helen.*

## THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A WOODMAN whose rough heart was out of tune  
(I think such hearts yet never came to good)  
Hated to hear, under the stars or moon,

One nightingale in an interfluous wood  
Sate the hungry dark with melody ;—  
And as a vale is watered by a flood,

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky  
Struggling with darkness—as a tuberose  
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,  
The singing of that happy nightingale  
In this sweet forest, from the golden close

Of evening, till the star of dawn may fail,  
Was interfused upon the silentness ;  
The folded roses and the violets pale

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss  
Of heaven with all its planets ; the dull ear  
Of the night-cradled earth ; the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere  
And every flower and beam and cloud and wave,  
And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretched in its rugged cave,  
And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,  
And every silver moth fresh from the grave,

Which is its cradle—ever from below  
Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,  
To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproachèd star,  
As if it were a lamp of earthly light,  
Unconscious, as some human lovers are,

Itself how low, how high beyond all height  
The heaven where it would perish!—and every form  
That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm  
Girt as with an interminable zone,  
Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion  
Out of their dreams; harmony became love  
In every soul but one.

. . . . .

And so this man returned with axe and saw  
At evening close from killing the tall treen,  
The soul of whom by nature's gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green  
The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,  
Chequering the sunlight of the blue serene

With jagged leaves,—and from the forest tops  
Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft  
Fast showers of aërial water drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,  
Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness ;—  
Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness  
Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers  
Hang like moist clouds :—or, where high branches  
kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers,  
Like a vast fane in a metropolis,  
Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries  
In which there is religion—and the mute  
Persuasion of unkindled melodies,

Odours and gleams and murmurs, which the lute  
Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast  
Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves, ere it has past  
To such brief unison as on the brain  
One tone, which never can recur, has cast,

One accent never to return again.

. . . . .

The world is full of Woodmen who expel  
Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life,  
And vex the nightingales in every dell.

## THE TOWER OF FAMINE.

AMID the desolation of a city,  
Which was the cradle, and is now the grave  
Of an extinguished people ; so that pity

Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of oblivion's wave,  
There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built  
Upon some prison homes, whose dwellers rave

For bread, and gold, and blood : pain, linked to guilt,  
Agitates the light flame of their hours,  
Until its vital oil is spent or spilt :

There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers  
And sacred domes ; each marble-ribbèd roof,  
The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers

Of solitary wealth ; the tempest-proof  
Pavilions of the dark Italian air,  
Are by its presence dimmed—they stand aloof,

And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare,  
As if a spectre wrapt in shapeless terror  
Amid a company of ladies fair

Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror  
Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue,  
The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,  
Should be absorbed, till they to marble grew.

1820.

## EVENING.

PONTE A MARE, PISA.

THE sun is set ; the swallows are asleep ;  
The bats are flitting fast in the grey air ;  
The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep,  
And evening's breath, wandering here and there  
Over the quivering surface of the stream,  
Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream.

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,  
Nor damp within the shadow of the trees ;  
The wind is intermitting, dry, and light ;  
And in the inconstant motion of the breeze  
The dust and straws are driven up and down,  
And whirled about the pavement of the town.

Within the surface of the fleeting river  
The wrinkled image of the city lay,  
Immovably unquiet, and for ever  
It trembles, but it never fades away ;  
Go to the . . .  
You, being changed, will find it then as now.

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut  
By darkest barriers of cinereous cloud,  
Like mountain over mountain huddled—but  
Growing and moving upwards in a crowd,  
And over it a space of watery blue,  
Which the keen evening star is shining through.

1821.

AND, like a dying lady, lean and pale,  
Who totters forth, wrapt in a gauzy veil,  
Out of her chamber, led by the insane  
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,  
The moon arose up in the murky east,  
A white and shapeless mass.

1820.

WHEN soft winds and sunny skies  
With the green earth harmonise,  
And the young and dewy dawn,  
Bold as an unhunted fawn,  
Up the windless heaven is gone,—  
Laugh—for ambushed in the day,  
Clouds and whirlwinds watch their prey.

1821.

## Poems of Pure Nature.

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### PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES.

LISTEN, listen, Mary mine,  
To the whisper of the Apennine,  
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,  
Or like the sea on a northern shore,  
Heard in its raging ebb and flow  
By the captives pent in the cave below.  
The Apennine in the light of day  
Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,  
Which between the earth and sky doth lay ;  
But when night comes, a chaos dread  
On the dim starlight then is spread,  
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm.

1818.



## THE CLOUD.

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,  
From the seas and the streams ;  
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid  
In their noon-day dreams.  
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken  
The sweet buds every one,  
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,  
As she dances about the sun.  
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,  
And whiten the green plains under,  
And then again I dissolve it in rain,  
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
And their great pines groan aghast ;  
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,  
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.  
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,  
Lightning my pilot sits,  
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,  
It struggles and howls at fits ;  
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,  
This pilot is guiding me,  
Lured by the love of the genii that move  
In the depths of the purple sea ;  
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,  
Over the lakes and the plains,  
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,  
The Spirit he loves remains ;

And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,  
    Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,  
    And his burning plumes outspread,  
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,  
    When the morning star shines dead,  
As on the jag of a mountain crag,  
    Which an earthquake rocks and swings,  
An eagle alit one moment may sit  
    In the light of its golden wings.  
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,  
    Its ardours of rest and of love,  
And the crimson pall of eve may fall  
    From the depth of heaven above,  
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,  
    As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,  
    Whom mortals call the moon,  
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,  
    By the midnight breezes strewn ;  
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,  
    Which only the angels hear,  
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,  
    The stars peep behind her and peer ;  
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,  
    Like a swarm of golden bees,  
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,  
    Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,  
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,  
    Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,  
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ;  
The volcanos are dim, and the stars reel and swim,  
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.  
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,  
Over a torrent sea,  
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,  
The mountains its columns be.  
The triumphal arch through which I march  
With hurricane, fire and snow,  
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,  
Is the million-coloured bow ;  
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,  
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,  
And the nursling of the sky ;  
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;  
I change, but I cannot die.  
For after the rain when with never a stain,  
The pavilion of heaven is bare,  
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,  
Build up the blue dome of air,  
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
And out of the caverns of rain,  
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,  
I arise and unbuild it again.

1820.

## THE DAWN.

- THE pale stars are gone !  
For the sun, their swift shepherd,  
To their folds them compelling,  
In the depths of the dawn,  
Hastes, in meteor eclipsing array, and they flee  
Beyond his blue dwelling,  
As fawns flee the leopard.

*Prom. Unbound.*

## DAWN AND DESIRE.

My coursers are fed with the lightning,  
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,  
And when the red morning is brightning  
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam ;  
They have strength for their swiftness I deem.

I desire : and their speed makes night kindle ;  
I fear : they outstrip the Typhoon ;  
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle  
We encircle the earth and the moon :  
We shall rest from long labours at noon.

On the brink of the night and the morning  
My coursers are wont to respire ;  
But the Earth has just whispered a warning  
That their flight must be swifter than fire :  
They shall drink the hot speed of desire !

*Prom. Unbound.*

## TWILIGHT AND DESIRE.

THE young moon has fed  
Her exhausted horn  
With the sunset's fire :  
The weak day is dead,  
But the night is not born ;  
And, like loveliness panting with wild desire  
While it trembles with fear and delight,  
Hesperus flies from awakening night,  
And pants in its beauty and speed with light  
Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.  
Thou beacon of love ! thou lamp of the free !  
Guide us far, far away,  
To climes where now veiled by the ardour of day  
Thou art hidden  
From waves on which weary noon,  
Faints in her summer swoon,  
Between Kingless continents sinless as Eden,  
Around mountains and islands inviolably  
Prankt on the sapphire sea.

*Hellas*

## ALL SUSTAINING LOVE.

THOU art the wine whose drunkenness is all  
We can desire, O Love ! and happy souls ;  
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their o'erflowing bowls  
Thousands who thirst for thy ambrosial dew ;—  
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investest it ; and when the heavens are blue  
Thou fillest them ; and when the earth is fair  
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its desarts and its mountains, till they wear  
Beauty like some bright robe ;—thou ever soarest  
Among the towers of men, and as soft air

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest,  
Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,  
Thou floatest among men ; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore :—the weak  
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts  
The strong have broken—yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not ?

*Prince Athanase.* 1817.

## SONG OF SPIRITS.

“ Where there is one pervading, one alone.”

To the deep, to the deep,  
                    Down, down !  
Through the shade of sleep,  
Through the cloudy strife  
Of Death and of Life ;  
Through the veil and the bar  
Of things which seem and are  
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,  
                    Down, down !

While the sound whirls around,  
                    Down, down !  
As the fawn draws the hound,  
As the lightning the vapour,  
As a weak moth the taper ;  
Death, despair ; love, sorrow ;  
Time both ; to day, to morrow ;  
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,  
                    Down, down !





Child of Light ! thy limbs are burning  
Thro' the vest which seems to hide them ;  
As the radiant lines of morning  
Thro' the clouds ere they divide them ;  
And this atmosphere divinest  
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.  
Fair are others ; none beholds thee,  
But thy voice sounds low and tender  
Like the fairest, for it folds thee  
From the sight, that liquid splendour,  
And all feel, yet see thee never,  
As I feel now, lost for ever !

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest  
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,  
And the souls of whom thou lovest  
Walk upon the winds with lightness,  
Till they fail, as I am failing,  
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

## ASIA ANSWERS.

My soul is an enchanted boat,  
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float  
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing ;  
And thine doth like an angel sit  
Beside a helm conducting it,  
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.  
It seems to float ever, for ever,  
Upon that many-winding river,  
Between mountains, woods, abysses,  
A paradise of wildernesses !  
Till, like one in slumber bound,  
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,  
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound.

## ECHO SONG TO ASIA.

Echoes—*unseen*.

ECHOES we : listen !

We cannot stay :

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away—

Child of Ocean !

O, follow, follow !

As our voice recedeth

Thro' the caverns hollow,

Where the forest spreadeth ;

*(More distant.)*

O, follow, follow !

Thro' the caverns hollow,

As the song floats thou pursue,

Where the wild bee never flew,

Thro' the noon-tide darkness deep

By the odour-breathing sleep

Of faint night flowers, and the waves

At the fountain-lighted caves,

While our music, wild and sweet,

Mocks thy gently falling feet,

Child of Ocean !

*Prom. Unbound.*

THE SPIRITS OF THE EARTH AND THE  
MOON.

IONE.

EVEN whilst we speak  
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?

PANTHEA.

'Tis the deep music of the rolling world  
Kindling within the strings of the waved air,  
Æolian modulations.

IONE.

Listen too,  
How every pause is filled with under-notes,  
Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones,  
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,  
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air  
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

PANTHEA.

But see where through two openings in the forest  
Which hanging branches overcanopy,  
And where two runnels of a rivulet,  
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,  
Have made their path of melody, like sisters  
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,  
Turning their dear disunion to an isle  
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts ;

Two visions of strange radiance float upon  
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,  
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet  
Under the ground and through the windless air.

## IONE.

I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,  
In which the mother of the months is borne  
By ebbing night into her western cave,  
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,  
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy  
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods  
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,  
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;  
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,  
Such as the genii of the thunder-storm  
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea  
When the sun rushes under it; they roll  
And move and grow as with an inward wind;  
Within it sits a wingèd infant, white  
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,  
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,  
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds  
Of its white robe, woof of ætherial pearl.  
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light  
Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens  
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity  
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured  
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,  
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,  
With fire that is not brightness; in its hand  
It sways a quivering moon-beam, from whose point

A guiding power directs the chariot's prow  
Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll  
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,  
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

## PANTHEA.

And from the other opening in the wood  
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,  
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,  
Solid as chrysal, yet through all its mass  
Flow, as through empty space, music and light :  
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,  
Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,  
Sphere within sphere ; and every space between  
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,  
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,  
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl  
Over each other with a thousand motions,  
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,  
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,  
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on,  
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,  
Intelligible words and music wild.  
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb  
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist  
Of elemental subtlety, like light ;  
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,  
The music of the living grass and air,  
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams  
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,  
Seem kneaded into one aërial mass  
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,

Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,  
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,  
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,  
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,  
And you can see its little lips are moving,  
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,  
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream

## IONE.

'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

## PANTHEA.

And from a star upon its forehead, shoot,  
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears  
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,  
Embleming heaven and earth united now,  
Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel  
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought  
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,  
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,  
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,  
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart ;  
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,  
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,  
And caverns on crystalline columns poised  
With vegetable silver overspread ;  
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs  
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,  
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops  
With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on  
And make appear the melancholy ruins  
Of cancelled cycles ; anchors, beaks of ships ;

Planks turned to marble ; quivers, helmets, and spears,  
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels  
Of scythèd chariots, and the emblazonry  
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,  
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems  
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin !  
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,  
Whose population which the earth grew over  
Was mortal, but not human ; see, they lie,  
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,  
Their statues, homes and fanes ; prodigious shapes  
Huddled in grey annihilation, split,  
Jammed in the hard, black deep ; and over these,  
The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,  
And fishes which were isles of living scale,  
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around  
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust  
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs  
Had crushed the iron crags ; and over these  
The jagged alligator, and the might  
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once  
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,  
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,  
Increased and multiplied like summer worms  
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe  
Wrapt deluge round it like a cloke, and they  
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished ; or some God  
Whose throne was in a comet, past, and cried,  
Be not ! And like my words they were no more.

*Prom. Unbound.*

## THE MOON AND THE EARTH.

## THE MOON.

BROTHER mine, calm wanderer,  
Happy globe of land and air,  
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,  
Which penetrates my frozen frame.  
And passes with the warmth of flame  
With love, and odour, and deep melody  
Through me, through me !

\* \* \* \* \*

THE snow upon my lifeless mountains  
Is loosened into living fountains,  
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine :  
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,  
It clothes with unexpected birth  
My cold bare bosom : Oh ! it must be thine  
On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee I feel, I know  
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,  
And living shapes upon my bosom move :  
Music is in the sea and air,  
Wingèd clouds soar here and there,  
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :  
'Tis Love, all Love !



## THE EARTH.

It interpenetrates my granite mass,  
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth  
pass,

Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers ;  
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,  
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,  
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE MOON.

The shadow of white death has past  
From my path in heaven at last,  
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;  
And through my newly-woven bowers,  
Wander happy paramours,  
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep  
Thy vales more deep.

## THE EARTH.

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold  
A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,  
And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,  
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,  
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray  
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst—

## THE MOON.

Thou art folded, thou art lying  
In the light which is undying  
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine ;  
All suns and constellations shower  
On thee a light, a life, a power  
Which doth array thy sphere ; thou pour'st thine  
On mine, on mine !

## THE EARTH.

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,  
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,  
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;  
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,  
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,  
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth  
doth keep.

## THE MOON.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,  
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,  
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull ;  
So when thy shadow falls on me,  
Then am I mute and still, by thee  
Covered ; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,  
Full, oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun  
Brightest world of many a one ;  
Green and azure sphere which shinest

With a light which is divinest  
Among all the lamps of Heaven  
To whom life and light is given ;  
I, thy crystal paramour  
Borne beside thee by a power  
Like the polar Paradise,  
Magnet-like of lovers' eyes ;  
I, a most enamoured maiden  
Whose weak brain is overladen  
With the pleasure of her love,  
Maniac-like around thee move  
Gazing, an insatiate bride,  
On thy form from every side  
Like a Mænad, round the cup  
Which Agave lifted up  
In the weird Cadmæan forest.  
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest  
I must hurry, whirl and follow  
Through the heavens wide and hollow,  
Sheltered by the warm embrace  
Of thy soul from hungry space,  
Drinking from thy sense and sight  
Beauty, majesty, and might,  
As a lover or cameleon  
Grows like what it looks upon,  
As a violet's gentle eye  
Gazes on the azure sky  
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,  
As a grey and watery mist  
Glowes like solid amethyst  
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds  
When the sunset sleeps  
Upon its snow—

## THE EARTH

And the weak day weeps

That it should be so.

Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight  
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light  
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,  
Through isles for ever calm.

*Prom. Unbound*

## THE MUSIC OF THE WOODS.

## SEMICHORUS I. OF SPIRITS.

THE path thro' which that lovely twain  
Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew,  
And each dark tree that ever grew,  
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue,  
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,  
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,  
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,  
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,  
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,  
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers  
Of the green laurel, blown anew ;  
And bends, and then fades silently,  
One frail and fair anemone :  
Or when some star of many a one  
That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,  
Has found the cleft thro' which alone  
Beams fall from high those depths upon  
Ere it is borne away, away,  
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,  
It scatters drops of golden light,  
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite :  
And the gloom divine is all around ;  
And underneath is the mossy ground.

## SEMICHORUS II.

There the voluptuous nightingales,  
Are awake thro' all the broad noon-day.  
When one with bliss or sadness fails,  
And thro' the windless ivy-boughs,  
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away  
On its mate's music-panting bosom ;  
Another from the swinging blossom,  
Watching to catch the languid close  
Of the last strain, then lifts on high  
The wings of the weak melody,  
'Till some new strain of feeling bear  
The song, and all the woods are mute ;  
When there is heard thro' the dim air  
The rush of wings, and rising there  
Like many a lake-surrounded flute,  
Sounds overflow the listener's brain  
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

## SEMICHORUS I.

There those enchanted eddies play  
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,  
By Demogorgon's mighty law,  
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,  
All spirits on that secret way ;  
As inland boats are driven to Ocean  
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw :  
And first there comes a gentle sound  
To those in talk or slumber bound,  
And wakes the destined. Soft emotion  
Attracts, impels them : those who saw

Say from the breathing earth behind  
There steams a plume-uplifting wind  
Which drives them on their path, while they  
Believe their own swift wings and feet  
The sweet desires within obey :  
And so they float upon their way,  
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,  
The storm of sound is driven along,  
Sucked up and hurrying : as they fleet  
Behind, its gathering billows meet  
And to the fatal mountain bear  
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

## FIRST FAUN.

Canst thou imagine where those spirits live  
Which make such delicate music in the woods ?  
We haunt within the least frequented caves  
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,  
Yet never meet them, tho' we hear them oft :  
Where may they hide themselves ?

## SECOND FAUN.

'Tis hard to tell :  
I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,  
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun  
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave  
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,  
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float  
Under the green and golden atmosphere  
Which noon-tide kindles thro' the woven leaves ;  
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,

The which they breathed within those lucent domes,  
Ascends to flow like meteors thro' the night,  
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,  
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire  
Under the waters of the earth again.

## FIRST FAUN.

If such live thus, have others other lives,  
Under pink blossoms or within the bells  
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,  
Or on their dying odours, when they die,  
Or in the sunlight of the spherèd dew?

## SECOND FAUN.

Aye, many more which we may well divine.  
But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,  
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,  
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs  
Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,  
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,  
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth  
One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer  
Our solitary twilights, and which charm  
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

*Prom. Unbound.* 1819.



## Classic Poems of Nature.

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### HYMN OF APOLLO.

THE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,  
Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries,  
From the broad moonlight of the sky,  
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—  
Waken me when their Mother, the grey Dawn,  
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,  
I walk over the mountains and the waves,  
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam ;

My footsteps pave the clouds with fire ; the caves  
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air  
Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill  
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day ;  
All men who do or even imagine ill

Fly me, and from the glory of my ray  
Good minds and open actions take new might,  
Until diminished by the reign of night.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers  
With their ætherial colours ; the Moon's globe  
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers  
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe :  
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine,  
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,  
Then with unwilling steps I wander down  
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even ;  
For grief that I depart they weep and frown :  
What look is more delightful than the smile  
With which I soothe them from the western isle ?

I am the eye with which the Universe  
Beholds itself and knows itself divine ;  
All harmony of instrument or verse,  
All prophecy, all medicine are mine,  
All light of art or nature ;—to my song,  
Victory and praise in their own right belong.

## HYMN OF PAN.

FROM the forests and highlands  
    We come, we come ;  
From the river-girt islands,  
    Where loud waves are dumb  
        Listening to my sweet pipings.  
The wind in the reeds and the rushes,  
    The bees on the bells of thyme,  
The birds on the myrtle bushes,  
    The cicale above in the lime,  
And the lizards below in the grass,  
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,  
    Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,  
    And all dark Tempe lay  
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing  
    The light of the dying day,  
        Speeded by my sweet pipings.  
The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,  
    And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,  
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,  
    And the brink of the dewy caves,  
And all that did then attend and follow  
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,  
    With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing stars,  
I sang of the dædal Earth,  
And of Heaven—and the giant wars,  
And Love, and Death, and Birth,—  
And then I changed my pipings,—  
Singing how down the vale of Menalus  
I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed :  
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus !  
It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed :  
All wept, as I think both ye now would,  
If envy or age had not frozen your blood,  
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

1820.

## THE BIRTH OF PLEASURE.

AT the creation of the Earth  
Pleasure, that divinest birth,  
From the soil of Heaven did rise,  
Wrapt in sweet wild melodies—  
Like an exhalation wreathing  
To the sound of air low-breathing  
Through Æolian pines, which make  
A shade and shelter to the lake  
Whence it rises soft and slow ;  
Her life breathing [limbs] did flow  
In the harmony divine  
Of an ever-lengthening line  
Which enwrapt her perfect form  
With a beauty clear and warm.

1819.

## ARETHUSA.

ARETHUSA arose  
From her couch of snows  
In the Acroceraunian mountains,—  
From cloud and from crag,  
With many a jag,  
Shepherding her bright fountains.  
She leapt down the rocks,  
With her rainbow locks  
Streaming among the streams ;—  
Her steps paved with green  
The downward ravine  
Which slopes to the western gleams :  
And gliding and springing  
She went, ever singing,  
In murmurs as soft as sleep ;  
The Earth seemed to love her,  
And Heaven smiled above her,  
As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,  
On his glacier cold,  
With his trident the mountains strook ;  
And opened a chasm  
In the rocks ;—with the spasm  
All Erymanthus shook.  
And the black south wind  
It concealed behind  
The urns of the silent snow,  
And earthquake and thunder  
Did rend in sunder

The bars of the springs below :  
The beard and the hair  
Of the River-god were  
Seen through the torrent's sweep,  
As he followed the light  
Of the fleet nymph's flight  
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

“ Oh, save me ! Oh, guide me !  
And bid the deep hide me,  
For he grasps me now by the hair ! ”  
The loud Ocean heard,  
To its blue depth stirred,  
And divided at her prayer ;  
And under the water  
The Earth's white daughter  
Fled like a sunny beam ;  
Behind her descended  
Her billows, unblended  
With the brackish Dorian stream :—  
Like a gloomy stain  
On the emerald main  
Alpheus rushed behind,—  
As an eagle pursuing  
A dove to its ruin  
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers  
Where the Ocean Powers  
Sit on their pearlèd thrones,  
Through the coral woods  
Of the weltering floods,

Over heaps of unvalued stones ;  
Through the dim beams  
Which amid the streams  
Weave a network of coloured light ;  
And under the caves,  
Where the shadowy waves  
Are as green as the forest's night :—  
Outspeeding the shark,  
And the sword-fish dark,  
Under the ocean foam,  
And up through the rifts  
Of the mountain cliffs  
They past to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains  
In Enna's mountains,  
Down one vale where the morning basks,  
Like friends once parted  
Grown single-hearted,  
They ply their watery tasks.  
At sunrise they leap  
From their cradles steep  
In the cave of the shelving hill ;  
At noon-tide they flow  
Through the woods below  
And the meadows of Asphodel ;  
And at night they sleep  
In the rocking deep  
Beneath the Ortygian shore ;—  
Like spirits that lie  
In the azure sky  
When they love but live no more.

## SONG OF PROSERPINE.

WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA.

SACRED Goddess, Mother Earth,  
Thou from whose immortal bosom,  
Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,  
Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,  
Breathe thine influence most divine  
On thine own child, Proserpine.

If with mists of evening dew  
Thou dost nourish these young flowers  
Till they grow, in scent and hue,  
Fairest children of the hours,  
Breathe thine influence most divine  
On thine own child, Proserpine.

1820.



## Poems of Home Life.

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TO MARY SHELLEY.

O MARY dear, that you were here  
With your brown eyes bright and clear,  
And your sweet voice, like a bird  
Singing love to its lone mate  
In the ivy bower disconsolate ;  
Voice the sweetest ever heard !  
And your brow more . . .  
Than the sky  
Of this azure Italy.

Mary dear, come to me soon,  
I am not well whilst thou art far ;  
As sunset to the spherèd moon,  
As twilight to the western star,  
Thou, belovèd, art to me.

O Mary dear, that you were here ;  
The Castle echo whispers " Here ! "

1818.

## TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

(With what truth I may say—

Roma ! Roma ! Roma !

Non è più come era prima !)

My lost William, thou in whom  
Some bright spirit lived, and did  
That decaying robe consume  
Which its lustre faintly hid,  
Here its ashes find a tomb,  
But beneath this pyramid  
Thou art not—if a thing divine  
Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine  
Is thy mother's grief and mine.

Where art thou, my gentle child ?  
Let me think thy spirit feeds,  
With its life intense and mild,  
The love of living leaves and weeds,  
Among these tombs and ruins wild ;—  
Let me think that through low seeds  
Of the sweet flowers and sunny grass,  
Into their hues and scents may pass  
A portion———

1819.

## TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

Thy little footsteps on the sands  
Of a remote and lonely shore ;  
The twinkling of thine infant hands,  
Where now the worm will feed no more :  
Thy mingled look of love and glee  
When we returned to gaze on thee.

## LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE.

LEGHORN, *July 1, 1820.*

THE spider spreads her webs, whether she be  
In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree ;  
The silkworm in the dark green mulberry leaves  
His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves ;  
So I, a thing whom moralists call worm,  
Sit spinning still round this decaying form,  
From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought—  
No net of words in garish colours wrought  
To catch the idle buzzers of the day—  
But a soft cell, where when that fades away,  
Memory may clothe in wings my living name  
And feed it with the asphodels of fame,  
Which in those hearts which must remember me  
Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist,  
Would think I were a mighty mechanist,  
Bent with sublime Archimedean art  
To breathe a soul into the iron heart  
Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,  
Which by the force of figured spells might win  
Its way over the sea, and sport therein ;  
For round the walls are hung dread engines, such  
As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch  
Ixion or the Titan ;—or the quick  
Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic,  
To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic,

Or those in philanthropic council met,  
Who thought to pay some interest for the debt  
They owed to Jesus Christ for their salvation,  
By giving a faint foretaste of damnation  
To Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser and the rest  
Who made our land an island of the blest,  
When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire  
On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire :—  
With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and  
jag,  
Which fishers found under the utmost crag  
Of Cornwall and the storm-encompassed isles,  
Where to the sky the rude sea rarely smiles  
Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn  
When the exulting elements in scorn  
Satiated with destroyed destruction, lay  
Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,  
As panthers sleep ;—and other strange and dread  
Magical forms the brick floor overspread——  
Proteus transformed to metal did not make  
More figures, or more strange ; nor did he take  
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,  
Or heap himself in such a horrid mass  
Of tin and iron not to be understood ;  
And forms of unimaginable wood,  
To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood :  
Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and groovèd  
blocks,  
The elements of what will stand the shocks  
Of wave and wind and time.—Upon the table  
More knacks and quips there be than I am able  
To catalogize in this verse of mine :—  
A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,

But quicksilver ; that dew which the gnomes drink  
When at their subterranean toil they swink,  
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who  
Reply to them in lava—cry halloo !  
And call out to the cities o'er their head,—  
Roofs, towers and shrines, the dying and the dead,  
Crash through the chinks of earth—and then all  
quaff

Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh.  
This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within  
The walnut bowl it lies, veinèd and thin,  
In colour like the wake of light that stains  
The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains  
The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze  
Is still—blue heaven smiles over the pale seas.  
And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I  
Yield to the impulse of an infancy  
Outlasting manhood—I have made to float  
A rude idealism of a paper boat :—  
A hollow screw with cogs—Henry will know  
The thing I mean and laugh at me,—if so  
He fears not I should do more mischief.—Next  
Lie bills and calculations much perplexed,  
With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint  
Traced over them in blue and yellow paint.  
Then comes a range of mathematical  
Instruments, for plans nautical and statical ;  
A heap of rosin, a queer broken glass  
With ink in it ;—a china cup that was  
What it will never be again, I think,  
A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink  
The liquor doctors rail at—and which I  
Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die

We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea,  
And cry out,—heads or tails? where'er we be.  
Near that a dusty paint box, some odd hooks,  
A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,  
Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,  
To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims,  
Lie heaped in their harmonious disarray  
Of figures,—disentangle them who may  
Baron de Tott's Memoirs beside them lie,  
And some odd volumes of old chemistry.  
Near those a most inexplicable thing,  
With lead in the middle—I'm conjecturing  
How to make Henry understand; but no—  
I'll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo,  
This secret in the pregnant womb of time,  
Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme.

And here like some weird Archimage sit I,  
Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,  
The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind  
Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind  
The gentle spirit of our meek reviews  
Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,  
Ruffling the ocean of their self-content;—  
I sit—and smile or sigh as is my bent,  
But not for them—Libeccio rushes round  
With an inconstant and an idle sound,  
I heed him more than them—the thunder-smoke  
Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak  
Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare;  
The ripe corn under the undulating air  
Undulates like an ocean;—and the vines  
Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines—

The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill  
The empty pauses of the blast ;—the hill  
Looks hoary through the white electric rain,  
And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain,  
The interrupted thunder howls ; above  
One chasm of heaven smiles, like the eye of Love  
On the unquiet world ;—while such things are,  
How could one worth your friendship heed the war  
Of worms ? the shriek of the world's carrion jays,  
Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise ?

You are not here ! the quaint witch Memory sees  
In vacant chairs, your absent images,  
And points where once you sat, and now should be  
But are not.—I demand if ever we  
Shall meet as then we met ;—and she replies,  
Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes ;  
“ I know the past alone—but summon home  
My sister Hope,—she speaks of all to come,”  
But I, an old diviner, who knew well  
Every false verse of that sweet oracle,  
Turned to the sad enchantress once again,  
And sought a respite from my gentle pain,  
In citing every passage o'er and o'er  
Of our communion—how on the sea shore  
We watched the ocean and the sky together,  
Under the roof of blue Italian weather ;  
How I ran home through last year's thunder-storm,  
And felt the transverse lightning linger warm  
Upon my cheek—and how we often made  
Feasts for each other, where good will outweighed  
The frugal luxury of our country cheer,  
As well it might, were it less firm and clear

Than ours must ever be ;—and how we spun  
A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun  
Of this familiar life, which seems to be  
But is not,—or is but quaint mockery  
Of all we would believe, and sadly blame  
The jarring and inexplicable frame  
Of this wrong world : —and then anatomize  
The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes  
Were closed in distant years ;—or widely guess  
The issue of the earth's great business,  
When we shall be as we no longer are—  
Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war  
Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not ;—or how  
You listened to some interrupted flow  
Of visionary rhyme,—in joy and pain  
Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain,  
With little skill perhaps ;—or how we sought  
Those deepest wells of passion or of thought  
Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,  
Staining their sacred waters with our tears ;  
Quenching a thirst ever to be renewed !  
Or how I, wisest lady ! then indued  
The language of a land which now is free,  
And winged with thoughts of truth and majesty,  
Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,  
And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,  
“ My name is Legion ! ” that majestic tongue  
Which Calderon over the desert flung  
Of ages and of nations ; and which found  
An echo in our hearts, and with the sound  
Startled oblivion ;—thou wert then to me  
As is a nurse—when inarticulately  
A child would talk as its grown parents do.



If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,  
If hawks chase doves through the ætherial way,  
Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,  
Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast  
Out of the forest of the pathless past  
These recollected pleasures?

You are now

In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow  
At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore  
Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.  
Yet in its depth what treasures! You will see  
That which was Godwin,—greater none than he  
Though fallen—and fallen on evil times—to stand  
Among the spirits of our age and land,  
Before the dread tribunal of *to come*  
The foremost,—while Rebuke cowers pale and  
dumb.

You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure  
In the exceeding lustre, and the pure  
Intense irradiation of a mind,  
Which, with its own internal lightning blind,  
Flags wearily through darkness and despair—  
A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,  
A hooded eagle among blinking owls.—  
You will see Hunt—one of those happy souls  
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom  
This world would smell like what it is—a tomb;  
Who is, what others seem; his room no doubt  
Is still adorned by many a cast from Shout,  
With graceful flowers tastefully placed about;  
And coronals of bay from ribbons hung,  
And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung;

The gifts of the most learn'd among some dozens  
Of female friends, sisters-in-law and cousins.  
And there is he with his eternal puns,  
Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns  
Thundering for money at a poet's door ;  
Alas ! it is no use to say, " I'm poor !"   
Or oft in graver mood, when he will look  
Things wiser than were ever read in book,  
Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.—  
You will see Hogg,—and I cannot express  
His virtues,—though I know that they are great,  
Because he locks. then barricades the gate  
Within which they inhabit ;—of his wit  
And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit.  
He is a pearl within an oyster shell,  
One of the richest of the deep ;—and there  
Is English Peacock with his mountain fair  
Turned into a Flamingo ;—that shy bird  
That gleams i' the Indian air—have you not heard  
When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,  
His best friends hear no more of him ?—but you  
Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,  
With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope  
Matched with this cameleopard—his fine wit  
Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it ;  
A strain too learn'd for a shallow age,  
Too wise for selfish bigots ; let his page  
Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,  
Fold itself up for the serener clime  
Of years to come, and find its recompense  
In that just expectation.—Wit and sense,  
Virtue and human knowledge ; all that might  
Make this dull world a business of delight,

Are all combined in Horace Smith.—And these,  
With some exceptions, which I need not tease  
Your patience by descanting on,—are all  
You and I know in London.

I recall

My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night.  
As water does a sponge, so the moonlight  
Fills the void, hollow, universal air—  
What see you?—unpavilioned heaven is fair  
Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,  
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan  
Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep;  
Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,  
Piloted by the many-wandering blast,  
And the rare stars rush through them dim and  
fast :——

All this is beautiful in every land.——  
But what see you beside?—a shabby stand  
Of Hackney coaches—a brick house or wall  
Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl  
Of our unhappy politics ;—or worse—  
A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse  
Mixed with the watchman's, partner of her trade,  
You must accept in place of serenade—  
Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring  
To Henry, some unutterable thing.  
I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit  
Built round dark caverns, even to the root  
Of the living stems that feed them—in whose bowers  
There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers ;  
Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn  
Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne

In circles quaint, and ever changing dance,  
Like wingèd stars the fire-flies flash and glance,  
Pale in the open moonshine, but each one  
Under the dark trees seems a little sun,  
A meteor tamed ; a fixed star gone astray  
From the silver regions of the milky way ;—  
Afar the Contadino's song is heard,  
Rude, but made sweet by distance—and a bird  
Which cannot be the Nightingale, and yet  
I know none else that sings so sweet as it  
At this late hour ;—and then all is still——  
Now Italy or London, which you will !

Next winter you must pass with me ; I'll have  
My house by that time turned into a grave  
Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,  
And all the dreams which our tormentors are ;  
Oh ! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock and Smith were there  
With every thing belonging to them fair !—  
We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek ;  
And ask one week to make another week  
As like his father, as I'm unlike mine,  
Which is not his fault, as you may divine.  
Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,  
Yet let's be merry : we'll have tea and toast ;  
Custards for supper, and an endless host  
Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies,  
And other such lady-like luxuries,—  
Feasting on which we will philosophize !  
And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,  
To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.  
And then we'll talk ;—what shall we talk about ?  
Oh ! there are themes enough for many a bout

Of thought-entangled descant ;—as to nerves—  
With cones and parallelograms and curves  
I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare  
To bother me—when you are with me there.  
And they shall never more sip laudanum,  
From Helicon or Himeros ;—well, come,  
And in despite of God and of the devil,  
We'll make our friendly philosophic revel  
Outlast the leafless time ; till buds and flowers  
Warn the obscure inevitable hours,  
Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew ;—  
“ Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

1820.

## THE AZIOLA.

“Do you not hear the Aziola cry?  
Methinks she must be nigh,”  
Said Mary, as we sate  
In dusk, ere stars were lit, or candles brought;  
And I, who thought  
This Aziola was some tedious woman,  
Asked, “Who is Aziola?” How elate  
I felt to know that it was nothing human,  
No mockery of myself to fear or hate:  
And Mary saw my soul,  
And laughed, and said, “Disquiet yourself not;  
’Tis nothing but a little downy owl.”

Sad Aziola! many an eventide  
Thy music I had heard  
By wood and stream, meadow and mountain side,  
And fields and marshes wide,  
Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,  
The soul ever stirred;  
Unlike and far sweeter than them all.  
Sad Aziola! from that moment I  
Loved thee and thy sad cry.

## THE BOAT ON THE SERCHIO.

OUR boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,  
Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,  
The helm sways idly, hither and thither ;  
    Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast  
And the oars and the sails ; but 'tis sleeping fast,  
Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,  
And the thin white moon lay withering there,  
To tower, and cavern, and rift and tree,  
The owl and the bat fled drowsily.  
Day had kindled the dewy woods,  
    And the rocks above and the stream below,  
And the vapours in their multitudes,  
    And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow,  
And clothed with light of æry gold  
The mists in their eastern caves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be,  
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,  
    And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,  
And the matin-bell and the mountain bee :  
Fire-flies were quenched on the dewy corn,  
    Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,  
    Like lamps which a student forgets to trim :  
The beetle forgot to wind his horn,  
    The crickets were still in the meadow and hill :  
Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun  
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,  
Fled from the brains which are their prey  
From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each,  
Who shaped us to his ends and not our own ;  
The million rose to learn, and one to teach  
What none yet ever knew or can be known.  
And many rose

Whose woe was such that fear became desire ;—  
Melchior and Lionel were not among those ;  
They from the throng of men had stepped aside,  
And made their home under the green hill side.  
It was that hill, whose intervening brow

Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye,  
Which the circumfluous plain waving below,  
Like a wide lake of green fertility,  
With streams and fields and marshes bare,  
Divides from the far Apennines—which lie  
Islanded in the immeasurable air.

“What think you, as she lies in her green cove,  
Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of?”  
“If morning dreams are true, why I should guess  
That she was dreaming of our idleness,  
And of the miles of watery way  
We should have led her by this time of day.”—

“Never mind,” said Lionel,  
“Give care to the winds, they can bear it well  
About yon poplar tops ; and see  
The white clouds are driving merrily,  
And the stars we miss this morn will light  
More willingly our return to-night.—  
How it whistles, Dominic's long black hair !  
List, my dear fellow ; the breeze blows fair :  
Hear how it sings into the air.”



. . . . .  
The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,  
The living breath is fresh behind,  
As with dews and sunrise fed,  
Comes the laughing morning wind ;—  
The sails are full, the boat makes head  
Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,  
Then flags with intermitting course,  
And hangs upon the wave, and stems  
The tempest of the . . . .

Which fervid from its mountain source  
Shallow, smooth and strong doth come,—  
Swift as fire, tempestuously  
It sweeps into the affrighted sea ;  
In morning's smile its eddies coil,  
Its billows sparkle, toss and boil,  
Torturing all its quiet light  
Into columns fierce and bright.

The Serchio, twisting forth  
Between the marble barriers which it clove  
At Ripafratta, leads through the dead chasm  
The wave that died the death which lovers love,  
Living in what it sought ; as if this spasm  
Had not yet past, the toppling mountains cling,  
But the clear stream in full enthusiasm  
Pours itself on the plain, then wandering  
Down one clear path of effluence crystalline,  
Sends its superfluous waves, that they may fling  
At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine,  
Then, through the pestilential desarts wild  
Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted pine,  
It rushes to the Ocean.

## THE WITCH OF ATLAS.

TO MARY.

(ON HER OBJECTING TO THE FOLLOWING POEM, UPON THE  
SCORE OF ITS CONTAINING NO HUMAN INTEREST.)

How, my dear Mary, are you critic-bitten  
    (For vipers kill, though dead), by some review,  
That you condemn these verses I have written,  
    Because they tell no story, false or true !  
What, though no mice are caught by a young kitten,  
    May it not leap and play as grown cats do,  
Till its claws come ? Prithee, for this one time,  
Content thee with a visionary rhyme.

What hand would crush the silken-wingèd fly,  
    The youngest of inconstant April's minions,  
Because it cannot climb the purest sky,  
    Where the swan sings, amid the sun's dominions ?  
Not thine. Thou knowest 'tis its doom to die,  
    When day shall hide within her twilight pinions,  
The lucent eyes, and the eternal smile,  
Serene as thine, which lent it life awhile.

To thy fair feet a wingèd Vision came,  
Whose date should have been longer than a day,  
And o'er thy head did beat its wings for fame,  
And in thy sight its fading plumes display ;  
The watery bow burned in the evening flame,  
But the shower fell, the swift sun went his way—  
And that is dead.—O, let me not believe  
That any thing of mine is fit to live !

Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years  
Considering and retouching Peter Bell ;  
Watering his laurels with the killing tears  
Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to hell  
Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the  
spheres  
Of heaven, with dewy leaves and flowers ; this  
well  
May be, for Heaven and Earth conspire to foil  
The over-busy gardener's blundering toil.

My Witch indeed is not so sweet a creature  
As Ruth or Lucy, whom his graceful praise  
Clothes for our grandsons—but she matches Peter,  
Though he took nineteen years, and she three  
days  
In dressing. Light the vest of flowing metre  
She wears ; he, proud as dandy with his stays,  
Has hung upon his wiry limbs a dress  
Like King Lear's "looped and windowed ragged-  
ness."

If you strip Peter, you will see a fellow,  
Scorched by Hell's hyperequatorial climate  
Into a kind of a sulphureous yellow :

A lean mark, hardly fit to fling a rhyme at ;  
In shape a Scaramouch, in hue Othello.

If you unveil my Witch, no priest nor primate  
Can shrive you of that sin,—if sin there be  
In love, when it becomes idolatry.

## The Witch of Atlas.

BEFORE those cruel Twins, whom at one birth  
Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,  
Error and Truth, had hunted from the Earth  
All those bright natures which adorned its prime,  
And left us nothing to believe in, worth  
The pains of putting into learnèd rhyme,  
A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain  
Within a cavern, by a secret fountain.

Her mother was one of the Atlantides :  
The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden  
In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas  
So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden  
In the warm shadow of her loveliness ;—  
He kissed her with his beams, and made all golden  
The chamber of grey rock in which she lay—  
She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

'Tis said, she first was changed into a vapour,  
And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,  
Like splendour-wingèd moths about a taper,  
Round the red west when the sun dies in it :  
And then into a meteor, such as caper  
On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit :  
Then, into one of those mysterious stars  
Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent  
Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden  
With that bright sign the billows to indent  
The sea-deserted sand—like children chidden,  
At her command they ever came and went—  
Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden  
Took shape and motion : with the living form  
Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm.

A lovely lady garmented in light  
From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are  
Two openings of unfathomable night  
Seen through a tempest's cloven roof—her hair  
Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,  
Picturing her form ; her soft smiles shone afar,  
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew  
All living things towards this wonder new.

And first the spotted cameleopard came,  
And then the wise and fearless elephant ;  
Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame  
Of his own volumes interwolved ;—all gaunt  
And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.  
They drank before her at her sacred fount ;  
And every beast of beating heart grew bold,  
Such gentleness and power even to behold.

The brinded lioness led forth her young,  
That she might teach them how they should  
forego  
Their inborn thirst of death ; the pard unstrung  
His sinews at her feet, and sought to know

With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue  
How he might be as gentle as the doe.  
The magic circle of her voice and eyes  
All savage natures did imparadise.

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick  
Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew  
Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick  
Cicadæ are, drunk with the noonday dew :  
And Dryope and Faunus followed quick,  
Teazing the God to sing them something new ;  
Till in this cave they found the lady lone,  
Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there,  
And though none saw him,—through the adamant  
Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air,  
And through those living spirits, like a want  
He past out of his everlasting lair  
Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant,  
And felt that wondrous lady all alone,—  
And she felt him, upon her emerald throne.

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,  
And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,  
Who drives her white waves over the green sea,  
And Ocean with the brine on his grey locks,  
And quaint Priapus with his company,  
All came, much wondering how the enwombèd  
rocks  
Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth ;—  
Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,  
And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant—  
Their spirits shook within them, as a flame  
Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt :  
Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,  
Centaur and Satyr, and such shapes as haunt  
Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead,  
Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

For she was beautiful—her beauty made  
The bright world dim, and every thing beside  
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade :  
No thought of living spirit could abide,  
Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,  
On any object in the world so wide,  
On any hope within the circling skies,  
But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle  
And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and  
three  
Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle  
The clouds and waves and mountains with ; and she  
As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle  
In the belated moon, wound skilfully ;  
And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—  
A shadow for the splendour of her love.

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling  
Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,  
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,  
Folded in cells of chrystal silence there ;



Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling  
Will never die—yet ere we are aware,  
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,  
And the regret they leave remains alone.

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,  
Each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis,  
Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint  
With the soft burthen of intensest bliss ;  
It was its work to bear to many a saint  
Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,  
Even Love's:—and others white, green, grey and black,  
And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

And odours in a kind of aviary  
Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept,  
Clipt in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy  
Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet  
slept ;  
As bats at the wired window of a dairy,  
They beat their vans ; and each was an adept,  
When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds,  
To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might  
Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,  
And change eternal death into a night  
Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep,  
Could make their tears all wonder and delight,  
She in her chrystal vials did closely keep :  
If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said  
The living were not envied of the dead.

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device,  
The works of some Saturnian Archimage,  
Which taught the expiations at whose price  
Men from the Gods might win that happy age  
Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice ;  
And which might quench the earth-consuming  
rage  
Of gold and blood—till men should live and move  
Harmonious as the sacred stars above.

And how all things that seem untameable,  
Not to be checked and not to be confined,  
Obey the spells of wisdom's wizard skill ;  
Time, Earth and Fire—the Ocean and the Wind.  
And all their shapes—and man's imperial will ;  
And other scrolls whose writings did unbind  
The inmost lore of Love—let the profane  
Tremble to ask what secrets they contain.

And wondrous works of substances unknown,  
To which the enchantment of her father's power  
Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,  
Were heaped in the recesses of her bower ;  
Carved lamps and chalices, and vials which shone  
In their own golden beams—each like a flower,  
Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light  
Under a cypress in a starless night.

At first she lived alone in this wild home,  
And her own thoughts were each a minister,  
Clothing themselves, or with the ocean foam,  
Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,

To work whatever purposes might come  
Into her mind ; such power her mighty Sire  
Had girt them with, whether to fly or run,  
Through all the regions which he shines upon.

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,  
Oreads and Naiads, with long weedy locks,  
Offered to do her bidding through the seas,  
Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks,  
And far beneath the matted roots of trees,  
And in the knarlèd heart of stubborn oaks,  
So they might live for ever in the light  
Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

“ This may not be,” the wizard maid replied :  
“ The fountains where the Naiades bedew  
Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried ;  
The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew  
Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide ;  
The boundless ocean like a drop of dew  
Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must  
Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

“ And ye with them will perish, one by one ;—  
If I must sigh to think that this shall be,  
If I must weep when the surviving Sun  
Shall smile on your decay—Oh, ask not me  
To love you till your little race is run ;  
I cannot die as ye must—over me  
Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye  
dwell  
Shall be my paths henceforth, and so—farewell !”

She spoke and wept :—the dark and azure well  
Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,  
And every little circlet where they fell  
Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres  
And intertangled lines of light ;—a knell  
Of sobbing voices came upon her ears  
From those departing Forms, o'er the serene  
Of the white streams and of the forest green.

All day the wizard lady sate aloof,  
Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity,  
Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof ;  
Or broidering the pictured poesy  
Of some high tale upon her growing woof,  
Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could  
dye  
In hues outshining Heaven—and ever she  
Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece  
Of sandal wood, rare gums and cinnamon ;  
Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is—  
Each flame of it is as a precious stone  
Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this  
Belongs to each and all who gaze upon.  
The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand  
She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

This lady never slept, but lay in trance  
All night within the fountain—as in sleep.  
Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty's glance ;  
Through the green splendour of the water deep

She saw the constellations reel and dance  
Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep  
The tenour of her contemplations calm,  
With open eyes, closed feet and folded palm.

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended  
From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,  
She past at dewfall to a space extended,  
Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel  
Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,  
There yawned an inextinguishable well  
Of crimson fire—full even to the brim,  
And overflowing all the margin trim.

Within the which she lay when the fierce war  
Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor  
In many a mimic moon and bearded star  
O'er woods and lawns;—the serpent heard it  
flicker,  
In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar—  
And when the windless snow descended thicker  
Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came  
Melt on the surface of the level flame.

She had a Boat, which some say Vulcan wrought  
For Venus, as the chariot of her star ;  
But it was found too feeble to be fraught  
With all the ardours in that sphere which are,  
And so she sold it, and Apollo bought  
And gave it to this daughter : from a car  
Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat  
Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

And others say, that, when but three hours old,  
The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,  
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,  
And like a horticultural adept,  
Stole a strange seed, and wrapt it up in mould,  
And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept  
Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,  
And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

The plant grew strong and green, the snowy flower  
Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began  
To turn the light and dew by inward power  
To its own substance; woven tracery ran  
Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er  
The solid rind, like a leaf's veined fan—  
Of which Love scooped this boat—and with soft  
motion  
Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit  
A living spirit within all its frame,  
Breathing the soul of swiftness into it.  
Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,  
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit—  
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame—  
Or on blind Homer's heart a wingèd thought,—  
In joyous expectation lay the boat.

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow  
Together, tempering the repugnant mass  
With liquid love—all things together grow  
Through which the harmony of love can pass;

And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow—

A living Image, which did far surpass  
In beauty that bright shape of vital stone  
Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth

It seemed to have developed no defect  
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,—

In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked ;  
The bosom lightly swelled with its full youth,

The countenance was such as might select  
Some artist that his skill should never die,  
Imaging forth such perfect purity.

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,

Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,  
Tipt with the speed of liquid lightnings,  
Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere :

She led her creature to the boiling springs

Where the light boat was moored, and said, “ Sit  
here !”

And pointed to the prow, and took her seat  
Beside the rudder, with opposing feet.

And down the streams which clove those mountains  
vast,

Around their inland islets, and amid  
The panther-peopled forests, whose shade cast  
Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid  
In melancholy gloom, the pinnacle past ;

By many a star-surrounded pyramid  
Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,  
And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

The silver noon into that winding dell,  
With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,  
Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell :  
A green and glowing light, like that which drops  
From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,  
When earth over her face night's mantle wraps ;  
Between the severed mountains lay on high  
Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky.

And ever as she went, the Image lay  
With folded wings and unawakened eyes ;  
And o'er its gentle countenance did play  
The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,  
Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay,  
And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet  
sighs  
Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,  
They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud  
Upon a stream of wind, the pinnacle went :  
Now lingering on the pools, in which abode  
The calm and darkness of the deep content  
In which they paused ; now o'er the shallow road  
Of white and dancing waters, all besprent  
With sand and polished pebbles :—mortal boat  
In such a shallow rapid could not float.

And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver  
Their snow-like waters into golden air,  
Or under chasms unfathomable ever  
Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear



A subterranean portal for the river,  
It fled—the circling sunbows did upbear  
Its fall down the hoar precipice of spray,  
Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

And when the wizard lady would ascend  
The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,  
Which to the inmost mountain upward tend—  
She called “Hermaphroditus!”—and the pale  
And heavy hue which slumber could extend  
Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale  
A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,  
Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions,  
With stars of fire spotting the stream below ;  
And from above into the Sun’s dominions  
Flinging a glory, like the golden glow  
In which spring clothes her emerald-wingèd  
minions,  
All interwoven with fine feathery snow  
And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,  
With which frost paints the pines in winter time.

And then it winnowed the Elysian air  
Which ever hung about that lady bright,  
With its ethereal vans—and speeding there,  
Like a star up the torrent of the night,  
Or a swift eagle in the morning glare  
Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight,  
The pinnacle, oared by those enchanted wings,  
Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

The water flashed like sunlight by the prow  
Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven ;  
The still air seemed as if its waves did flow  
In tempest down the mountains ; loosely driven  
The lady's radiant hair streamed to and fro :  
Beneath, the billows having vainly striven  
Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel  
The swift and steady motion of the keel.

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,  
Or in the noon of interlunar night,  
The lady-witch in visions could not chain  
Her spirit ; but sailed forth under the light  
Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain  
Its storm-outspeeding wings, the Hermaphrodite ;  
She to the Austral waters took her way,  
Beyond the fabulous Thamondocana.

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven,  
Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast  
shake,  
With the Antarctic constellations paven,  
Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake—  
There she would build herself a windless haven  
Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make  
The bastions of the storm, when through the sky  
The spirits of the tempest thundered by.

A haven beneath whose translucent floor  
The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,  
And around which the solid vapours hoar,  
Based on the level waters, to the sky

Lifted their dreadful crags, and like a shore  
Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly  
Hemmed in with rifts and precipices grey,  
And hanging crags, many a cove and bay.

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash  
Of the wind's scourge, foamed like a wounded  
thing ;

And the incessant hail with stony clash  
Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing  
Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash  
Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering  
Fragment of inky thunder-smoke—this haven  
Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven. •

On which that lady played her many pranks,  
Circling the image of a shooting star,  
Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks  
Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,  
In her light boat ; and many quips and cranks  
She played upon the water, till the car  
Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan,  
To journey from the misty east began.

And then she called out of the hollow turrets  
Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermillion,  
The armies of her ministering spirits—  
In mighty legions, million after million,  
They came, each troop emblazoning its merits  
On meteor flags ; and many a proud pavilion  
Of the intertexture of the atmosphere  
They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen  
Of woven exhalations, underlaid  
With lambent lightning fire, as may be seen  
A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid  
With crimson silk—cressets from the serene  
Hung there, and on the water for her tread  
A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,  
Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught  
Upon those wandering isles of æry dew,  
Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not,  
She sate, and heard all that had happened new  
Between the earth and moon, since they had  
brought

The last intelligence—and now she grew  
Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night—  
And now she wept, and now she laughed outright.

These were tame pleasures ; she would often climb  
The steepest ladder of the crudded rack  
Up to some beakèd cape of cloud sublime,  
And like Arion on the dolphin's back  
Ride singing through the shoreless air ;—oft time  
Following the serpent lightning's winding track,  
She ran upon the platforms of the wind,  
And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

And sometimes to those streams of upper air  
Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round,  
She would ascend, and win the spirits there  
To let her join their chorus. Mortals found

That on those days the sky was calm and fair,  
And mystic snatches of harmonious sound  
Wandered upon the earth where'er she past,  
And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,  
To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads  
Egypt and Æthiopia, from the steep  
Of utmost Axumè, until he spreads,  
Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,  
His waters on the plain : and crested heads  
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,  
And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

By Mœris and the Mareotid lakes,  
Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors,  
Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,  
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,  
Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes  
Of those huge forms—within the brazen doors  
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,  
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

And where within the surface of the river  
The shadows of the massy temples lie,  
And never are erased—but tremble ever  
Like things which every cloud can doom to die,  
Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever  
The works of man pierced that serenest sky  
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight  
To wander in the shadow of the night.

With motion like the spirit of that wind  
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet  
Past through the peopled haunts of human kind,  
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,  
Through fane, and palace-court, and labyrinth mined  
With many a dark and subterranean street  
Under the Nile; through chambers high and deep  
She past, observing mortals in their sleep.

A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see  
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep.  
Here lay two sister twins in infancy;  
There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;  
Within, two lovers linkèd innocently  
In their loose locks which over both did creep  
Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm  
Old age with snow-bright air and folded palm.

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,  
Not to be mirrored in a holy song—  
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,  
And pale imaginings of visioned wrong;  
And all the code of custom's lawless law  
Written upon the brows of old and young:  
"This," said the wizard maiden, "is the strife  
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life."

And little did the sight disturb her soul.—  
We, the weak mariners of that wide lake  
Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,  
Our course unpiloted and starless make

O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal :—

But she in the calm depths her way could take,  
Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide  
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

And she saw princes couched under the glow  
Of sunlike gems ; and round each temple-court  
In dormitories ranged, row after row,

She saw the priests asleep—all of one sort—  
For all were educated to be so.—

The peasants in their huts, and in the port  
The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,  
And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves.

And all the forms in which those spirits lay

Were to her sight like the diaphanous  
Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array

Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us  
Only their scorn of all concealment : they

Move in the light of their own beauty thus.  
But these and all now lay with sleep upon them,  
And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

She, all those human figures breathing there,

Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes  
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,

And often through a rude and worn disguise  
She saw the inner form most bright and fair—

And then she had a charm of strange device,  
Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone,  
Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

Alas ! Aurora, what wouldst thou have given

For such a charm when Tithon became grey ?  
Or how much, Venus, of thy silver Heaven

Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina  
Had half (oh ! why not all ?) the debt forgiven

Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,  
To any witch who would have taught you it ?

The Heliad doth not know its value yet."

'Tis said in after times her spirit free

Knew what love was, and felt itself alone—  
But holy Dian could not chaster be

Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,  
Than now this lady—like a sexless bee

Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none,  
Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden  
Past with an eye serene and heart unladen.

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave

Strange panacea in a chrystal bowl :—  
They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave,  
And lived thenceforward as if some controul,  
Mightier than life, were in them ; and the grave  
Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,  
Was as a green and overarching bower  
Lit by the gems of many a starry flower.

For on the night when they were buried, she

Restored the embalmers ruining, and shook  
The light out of the funeral lamps, to be  
A mimic day within that deathly nook ;



And she unwound the woven imagery

Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took  
The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,  
And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

And there the body lay, age after age,

Mute, breathing, beating, warm and undecaying,  
Like one asleep in a green hermitage,  
With gentle smiles about its eyelids playing,  
And living in its dreams beyond the rage

Of death or life ; while they were still arraying  
In liveries ever new, the rapid, blind  
And fleeting generations of mankind.

And she would write strange dreams upon the brain

Of those who were less beautiful, and make  
All harsh and crooked purposes more vain

Than in the desert is the serpent's wake  
Which the sand covers,—all his evil gain

The miser in such dreams would rise and shake  
Into a beggar's lap ;—the lying scribe  
Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

The priests would write an explanation full,

Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,  
How the god Apis really was a bull,

And nothing more ; and bid the herald stick  
The same against the temple doors, and pull

The old cant down ; they licensed all to speak  
Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and geese  
By pastoral letters to each diocese.

The king would dress an ape up in his crown  
And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,  
And on the right hand of the sunlike throne  
Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat  
The chatterings of the monkey.—Every one  
Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet  
Of their great Emperor, when the morning came,  
And kissed—alas, how many kiss the same !

The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths, and  
Walked out of quarters in somnambulism ;  
Round the red anvils you might see them stand  
Like Cyclopes in Vulcan's sooty abysm,  
Beating their swords to ploughshares ; —in a band  
The gaolers sent those of the liberal schism  
Free through the streets of Memphis, much, I wis  
To the annoyance of king Amasis.

And timid lovers who had been so coy,  
They hardly knew whether they loved or not,  
Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,  
To the fulfilment of their inmost thought ;  
And when next day the maiden and the boy  
Met one another, both, like sinners caught,  
Blushed at the thing which each believed was done  
Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone ;

And then the Witch would let them take no ill :  
Of many thousand schemes which lovers find,  
The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill  
Of happiness in marriage warm and kind.

Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,  
Were torn apart, a wide wound, mind from mind !  
She did unite again with visions clear  
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

These were the pranks she played among the cities  
Of mortal men, and what she did to sprites  
And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties  
To do her will, and show their subtle slights,  
I will declare another time ; for it is  
A tale more fit for the weird winter nights,  
Than for these garish summer days, when we  
Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

1820.

## The Question.

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### THE QUESTION.

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,  
Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,  
And gentle odours led my steps astray,  
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring  
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay  
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling  
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,  
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,  
Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth,  
The constellated flower that never sets ;  
Faint oxlips ; tender bluebells, at whose birth  
The sod scarce heaved ; and that tall flower that wets—  
Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—  
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,  
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,  
Green cow-bind and the moonlight-coloured May,  
And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine  
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the day ;  
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,  
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray ;  
And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,  
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge  
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with  
white,  
And starry river buds among the sedge,  
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,  
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge  
With moonlight beams of their own watery light ;  
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green  
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers  
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way  
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers  
Were mingled or opposed, the like array  
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours  
Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,  
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,  
That I might there present it !—Oh ! to whom ?

1820.

## TO EMILIA VIVIANI.

MADONNA, wherefore hast thou sent to me  
Sweet basil and mignonette?  
Embleming love and health, which never yet  
In the same wreath might be.  
Alas, and they are wet!  
Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?  
For never rain or dew  
Such fragrance drew  
From plant or flower—the very doubt endears  
My sadness ever new,  
The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee.  
1821.

## Epipsychidion.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE  
LADY EMILIA VIVIANI, NOW IMPRISONED IN THE  
CONVENT OF ST. ANNE, PISA.

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nel infinito un  
Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro.  
—*Her own words.*

MY Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few  
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,  
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain ;  
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring  
Thee to base company (as chance may do),  
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,  
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,  
My last delight ! tell them that they are dull,  
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

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### ADVERTISEMENT.

[BY SHELLEY.]

THE writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular ; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it re-

lates ; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that, *gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico : e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.*

The present poem appears to have been intended by the writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite page is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone

*Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.*

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend : be it a smile not of contempt, but pity.

## EPIPSYCHIDION.

SWEET Spirit ! Sister of that orphan one,  
Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,  
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee  
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird ! who, from thy narrow cage,  
Pourest such music, that it might assuage  
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,  
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody ;  
This song shall be thy rose : its petals pale  
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale !  
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,  
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-wingèd Heart ! who dost for ever  
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,  
Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed  
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,



Lie shattered ; and thy panting, wounded breast  
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest !  
I weep vain tears : blood would less bitter be,  
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.

Seraph of Heaven ! too gentle to be human,  
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman  
All that is insupportable in thee  
Of light, and love, and immortality !  
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse !  
Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe !  
Thou Moon beyond the clouds ! Thou living Form  
Among the Dead ! Thou Star above the Storm !  
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror !  
Thou Harmony of Nature's art ! Thou Mirror  
In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,  
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on !  
Aye, even the dim words which obscure thee now  
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow ;  
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song  
All of its much mortality and wrong,  
With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew  
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,  
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy :  
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see  
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,  
I love thee ; though the world by no thin name  
Will hide that love, from its unvalued shame.  
Would we two had been twins of the same mother !  
Or, that the name my heart lent to another

Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,  
Blending two beams of one eternity !  
Yet were one lawful and the other true,  
These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,  
How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me !  
I am not thine : I am a part of *thee*

Sweet Lamp ! my moth-like Muse has burnt its  
wings ;  
Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,  
Young Love should teach Time, in his own grey style,  
All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,  
A lovely soul formed to be blest and bless ?  
A well of sealed and secret happiness,  
Whose waters like blithe light and music are,  
Vanquishing dissonance and gloom ? A Star  
Which moves not in the moving Heavens, alone ?  
A smile amid dark frowns ? a gentle tone  
Amid rude voices ? a beloved light ?  
A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight ?  
A Lute, which those whom love has taught to play  
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day  
And lull fond grief asleep ? a buried treasure ?  
A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure ?  
A violet-shrouded grave of Woe ?—I measure  
The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,  
And find—alas ! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,  
And lured me towards sweet Death ; as Night by Day,  
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,  
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,  
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,  
Were less ethereally light : the brightness

Of her divinest presence trembles through  
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew  
Embodied in the windless Heaven of June  
Amid the splendour-wingèd stars, the Moon  
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful :  
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full  
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,  
Killing the sense with passion ; sweet as stops  
Of planetary music heard in trance.  
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,  
The sun-beams of those wells which ever leap  
Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep  
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense.  
The glory of her being, issuing thence,  
Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade  
Of unentangled intermixture, made  
By Love, of light and motion : one intense  
Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,  
Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing  
Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing  
With the unintermitted blood, which there  
Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air  
The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,)  
Continuously prolonged, and ending never,  
Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled  
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world ;  
Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.

Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress,  
And her loose hair ; and where some heavy tress  
The air of her own speed has disentwined,  
The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind ;

And in the soul a wild odour is felt,  
 Beyond the sense, like fiery dew that melt  
 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—  
 See where she stands ! a mortal shape indued  
 With love and life and light and deity,  
 And motion which may change but cannot die ;  
 An image of some bright Eternity ;  
 A shadow of some golden dream ; a Splendour  
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless ; a tender  
 Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love  
 Under whose motions life's dull billows move ;  
 A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning ;  
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,  
 With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy  
 Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me !

What have I dared ? where am I lifted ? how  
 Shall I descend, and perish not ? I know  
 That Love makes all things equal : I have heard  
 By mine own heart this joyous truth averred :  
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod  
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse ! Sister ! Angel ! Pilot of the Fate  
 Whose course has been so starless ! O too late  
 Belovèd ! O too soon adored, by me !  
 For in the fields of immortality  
 My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,  
 A divine presence in a place divine ;  
 Or should have moved beside it on this earth,  
 A shadow of that substance, from its birth ;  
 But not as now :—I love thee ; yes, I feel  
 That on the fountain of my heart a seal

Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright  
For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.  
We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,  
For one another, though dissimilar ;  
Such difference without discord, as can make  
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake  
As trembling leaves in a continuous air ?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare  
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wreckt.  
I never was attached to that great sect,  
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select  
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,  
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
To cold oblivion, though it is in the code  
Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,  
Who travel to their home among the dead  
By the broad highway of the world, and so  
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,  
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay  
That to divide is not to take away.  
Love is like understanding, that grows bright,  
Gazing on many truths ; 'tis like thy light,  
Imagination ! which from earth and sky,  
And from the depths of human phantasy,  
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills  
The Universe with glorious beams, and kills  
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow  
Of its reverberated lightning.    Narrow

The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,  
The life that wears, the spirit that creates  
One object, and one form, and builds thereby  
A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this :  
Evil from good ; misery from happiness ;  
The baser from the nobler ; the impure  
And frail, from what is clear and must endure.  
If you divide suffering and dross, you may  
Diminish till it is consumed away ;  
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,  
Each part exceeds the whole ; and we know not  
How much, while any yet remains unshared,  
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared :  
This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw  
The unenvied light of hope ; the eternal law  
By which those live, to whom this world of life  
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife  
Tills for the promise of a later birth  
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft  
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,  
In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,  
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,  
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves  
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves  
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor  
Paved her light steps ;—on an imagined shore,  
Under the grey beak of some promontory  
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,  
That I beheld her not. In solitudes  
Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,

And from the fountains, and the odours deep  
Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep  
Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,  
Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air ;  
And from the breezes whether low or loud,  
And from the rain of every passing cloud,  
And from the singing of the summer-birds,  
And from all sounds, all silence. In the words  
Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,  
Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm  
Which with the shattered present chokes the past ;  
And in that best philosophy, whose taste  
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom  
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom ;  
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth  
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,  
And towards the loadstar of my one desire,  
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight  
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,  
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere  
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,  
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—  
But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,  
Past, like a God throned on a wingèd planet,  
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,  
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade ;  
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,  
I would have followed, though the grave between  
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen :  
When a voice said :—" O Thou of hearts the weakest,  
The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest."

Then I—"where?" the world's echo answered  
"where!"

And in that silence, and in my despair,  
I questioned every tongueless wind that flew  
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew  
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul;  
And murmured names and spells which have  
    controul

Over the sightless tyrants of our fate;  
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate  
The night which closed on her; nor uncreate  
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,  
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,  
The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her:  
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear  
And every gentle passion sick to death,  
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,  
Into the wintry forest of our life;  
And struggling through its error with vain strife,  
And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,  
And half bewildered by new forms, I past  
Seeking among those untaught foresters  
If I could find one form resembling hers,  
In which she might have masked herself from me.  
There,—One, whose voice was venom'd melody  
Sate by a well, under blue night-shade bowers;  
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,  
Her touch was as electric poison,—flame  
Out of her looks into my vitals came,  
And from her living cheeks and bosom flew  
A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew  
Into the core of my green heart, and lay  
Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown grey



O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime  
With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought  
The shadow of that idol of my thought.  
And some were fair—but beauty dies away :  
Others were wise—but honeyed words betray :  
And One was true—oh ! why not true to me ?  
Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,  
I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,  
Wounded and weak and panting ; the cold day  
Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain.  
When, like a noon-day dawn, there shone again  
Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed  
As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed,  
As is the Moon, whose changes ever run  
Into themselves, to the eternal Sun ;  
The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright  
isles,  
Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,  
That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame  
Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,  
And warms not but illumines. Young and fair  
As the descended Spirit of that sphere,  
She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night  
From its own darkness, until all was bright  
Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,  
And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,  
She led me to a cave in that wild place,  
And sate beside me, with her downward face  
Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon  
Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.  
And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,  
And all my being became bright or dim

As the Moon's image in a summer sea,  
According as she smiled or frowned on me ;  
And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed :  
Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead :—  
For at her silver voice came Death and Life,  
Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,  
Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,  
The wandering hopes of one abandoned Mother,  
And through the cavern without wings they flew,  
And cried " Away, he is not of our crew."  
I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,  
Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips  
Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse ;—  
And how my soul was as a lampless sea,  
And who was then its Tempest ; and when She,  
The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost  
Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast  
The moving billows of my being fell  
Into a death of ice, immoveable ;—  
And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,  
The white Moon smiling all the while on it,  
These words conceal :—If not, each word would be  
The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me !

At length, into the obscure Forest came  
The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.  
Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns  
Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,  
And from her presence life was radiated  
Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead ;  
So that her way was paved, and roofed above  
With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love ;

And music from her respiration spread  
Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated  
By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,  
So that the savage winds hung mute around ;  
And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair  
Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air :  
Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,  
When light is changed to love, this glorious One  
Floated into the cavern where I lay,  
And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay  
Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below  
As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow  
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night  
Was penetrating me with living light :  
I knew it was the Vision veiled from me  
So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,  
This world of love, this *me* ; and into birth  
Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart  
Magnetic might into its central heart ;  
And lift its billows and its mists, and guide  
By everlasting laws, each wind and tide  
To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave ;  
And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave  
Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers  
The armies of the rain-bow-wingèd showers ;  
And, as those married lights, which from the towers  
Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering  
globe  
In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe ;  
And all their many-mingled influence blend.  
If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end ;—

So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway  
 Govern my sphere of being, night and day !  
 Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might ;  
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light ;  
 And, through the shadow of the seasons three  
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,  
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,  
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.  
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,  
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe  
 Towards thine own ; till, wreckt in that convulsion,  
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,  
 Thine went astray and that was rent in twain ;  
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again !  
 Be there love's folding-star at thy return ;  
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn  
 Of golden fire ; the Moon will veil her horn  
 In thy last smiles ; adoring Even and Morn  
 Will worship thee with incense of calm breath  
 And lights and shadows ; as the star of Death  
 And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild  
 Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled  
 Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine  
 A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,

Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth  
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth  
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,  
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.  
 To whatsoever of dull mortality

Is mine, remain a vestal sister still ;  
To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,  
Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united  
Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.  
The hour is come :—the destined Star has risen  
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.  
The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set  
The sentinels—but true love never yet  
Was thus constrained : it overleaps all fence :  
Like lightning, with invisible violence  
Piercing its continents ; like Heaven's free breath,  
Which he who grasps can hold not ; liker Death,  
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way  
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array  
Of arms : more strength has Love than he or they ;  
For it can burst his charnel, and make free  
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,  
The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbour now,  
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow ;  
There is a path on the sea's azure floor,  
No keel has ever ploughed that path before ;  
The halcyons brood around the foamless isles ;  
The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles ;  
The merry mariners are bold and free :  
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me ?  
Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest  
Is a far Eden of the purple East ;  
And we between her wings will sit, while Night  
And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,  
Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,  
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.

It is an isle under Ionian skies,  
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,  
And, for the harbours are not safe and good,  
This land would have remained a solitude  
But for some pastoral people native there,  
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air  
Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,  
Simple and spirited ; innocent and bold,  
The blue Ægean girds this chosen home,  
With ever-changing sound and light and foam,  
Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar ;  
And all the winds wandering along the shore  
Undulate with the undulating tide :  
There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide ;  
And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,  
As clear as elemental diamond,  
Or serene morning air ; and far beyond,  
The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer  
(Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year,)  
Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls  
Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls  
Illumining, with sound that never fails  
Accompany the noon-day nightingales ;  
And all the place is peopled with sweet airs ;  
The light clear element which the isle wears  
Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,  
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,  
And falls upon the eye-lids like faint sleep ;  
And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,  
And dart their arrowy odour through the brain  
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.  
And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,  
With that deep music is in unison :

Which is a soul within the soul—they seem  
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—  
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,  
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity ;  
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,  
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air  
It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,  
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light  
Upon its mountain-peaks ; blind vultures, they  
Sail onward far upon their fatal way :  
The wingèd storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm  
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm  
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,  
From which its fields and woods ever renew  
Their green and golden immortality.  
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky  
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,  
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,  
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,  
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride  
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,  
Blushes and trembles at its own excess :  
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less  
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,  
An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile  
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen  
O'er the grey rocks, blue waves, and forests green,  
Filling their bare and void interstices.—  
But the chief marvel of the wilderness  
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how  
None of the rustic island-people know :  
'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height  
It overtops the woods ; but, for delight,

Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime  
Had been invented, in the world's young prime,  
Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,  
An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house  
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.  
It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,  
But, as it were Titanic ; in the heart  
Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown  
Out of the mountains, from the living stone,  
Lifting itself in caverns light and high :  
For all the antique and learned imagery  
Has been erased, and in the place of it  
The ivy and the wild-vine interknit  
The volumes of their many twining stems ;  
Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems  
The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky  
Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery  
With Moon-light patches, or star atoms keen,  
Or fragments of the day's intense serene ;—  
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.  
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers  
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem  
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream  
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we  
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed  
Thee to be lady of the solitude.—  
And I have fitted up some chambers there  
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,  
And level with the living winds, which flow  
Like waves above the living waves below.—



I have sent books and music there, and all  
Those instruments with which high spirits call  
The future from its cradle, and the past  
Out of its grave, and make the present last  
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,  
Folded within their own eternity.  
Our simple life wants little, and true taste  
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste  
The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,  
Nature, with all her children, haunts the hill.  
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet  
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit  
Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance  
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance ;  
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moon-light  
Before our gate, and the slow, silent night  
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.  
Be this our home in life, and when years heap  
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,  
Let us become the over-hanging day,  
The living soul of this Elysian isle,  
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile  
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,  
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,  
And wander in the meadows, or ascend  
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend  
With lightest winds, to touch their paramour ;  
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,  
Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea  
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—  
Possessing and possest by all that is  
Within that calm circumference of bliss,  
And by each other, till to love and live  
Be one :—or, at the noontide hour, arrive

Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep  
The moonlight of the expired night asleep,  
Through which the awakened day can never peep ;  
A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,  
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights ;  
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain  
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.  
And we will talk, until thought's melody  
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die  
In words, to live again in looks, which dart  
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,  
Harmonizing silence without a sound.  
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,  
And our veins beat together ; and our lips  
With other eloquence than words, eclipse  
The soul that burns between them, and the wells  
Which boil under our being's inmost cells,  
The fountains of our deepest life, shall be  
Confused in passion's golden purity,  
As mountain-springs under the morning Sun.  
We shall become the same, we shall be one  
Spirit within two frames, oh ! wherefore two ?  
One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,  
Till like two meteors of expanding flame,  
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,  
Touch, mingle, are transfigured ; ever still  
Burning, yet ever inconsumable :  
In one another's substance finding food,  
Like flames too pure and light and unimbued  
To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,  
Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away :  
One hope within two wills, one will beneath  
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,

One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,  
 And one annihilation. Woe is me !  
 The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce  
 Into the height of love's rare Universe,  
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.—  
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire !

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Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,  
 And say :—" We are the masters of thy slave ;  
 What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine ?"  
 Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,  
 All singing loud : " Love's very pain is sweet,  
 But its reward is in the world divine  
 Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave."  
 So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste  
 Over the hearts of men, until ye meet  
 Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,  
 And bid them love each other and be blest :  
 And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,  
 And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

1820.

## FRAGMENT.

Is it that in some brighter sphere  
 We part from friends we meet with here ?  
 Or do we see the Future pass  
 Over the Present's dusky glass ?  
 Or what is that that makes us seem  
 To patch up fragments of a dream,  
 Part of which comes true, and part  
 Beats and trembles in the heart ?

1819.

# Poems to Liberty, Greece, and Italy.

## ODE TO NAPLES.

### EPODE I. *a.*

I STOOD within the city disinterred ;  
And heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls  
Of spirits passing through the streets ; and heard  
The Mountain's slumberous voice at intervals  
Thrill through those roofless halls ;  
The oracular thunder penetrating shook  
The listening soul in my suspended blood ;  
I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke—  
I felt, but heard not :—through white columns  
glowed  
The isle-sustaining Ocean-flood,  
A plane of light between two Heavens of azure :  
Around me gleamed many a bright sepulchre  
Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his pleasure  
Were to spare Death, had never made erasure ;  
But every living lineament was clear  
As in the sculptor's thought ; and there  
The wreaths of stony myrtle, ivy and pine,  
Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded snow,  
Seemed only not to move and grow  
Because the crystal silence of the air  
Weighed on their life ; even as the Power divine  
Which then lulled all things, brooded upon mine.

## EPODE II. a.

Then gentle winds arose  
 With many a mingled close  
 Of wild Æolian sound and mountain-odour keen ;  
 And where the Baian ocean  
 Welters with airlike motion,  
 Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,  
 Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves  
 Even as the ever stormless atmosphere  
 Floats o'er the Elysian realm,  
 It bore me like an Angel, o'er the waves  
 Of sunlight, whose swift pinnacle of dewy air  
 No storm can overwhelm ;  
 I sailed, where ever flows  
 Under the calm Serene  
 A spirit of deep emotion  
 From the unknown graves  
 Of the dead kings of Melody.  
 Shadowy Aornos darkened o'er the helm  
 The horizontal æther ; heaven stript bare  
 Its depths over Elysium, where the prow  
 Made the invisible water white as snow ;  
 From that Typhæan mount, Inarime  
 There streamed a sunlight vapour, like the  
 standard  
 Of some ætherial host ;  
 Whilst from all the coast,  
 Louder and louder, gathering round, there  
 wandered  
 Over the oracular woods and divine sea  
 Propheesyings which grew articulate—  
 They seize me—I must speak them—be they fate !

STROPHE  $\alpha$ . I.

Naples ! thou Heart of men which ever pantest  
     Naked, beneath the lidless eye of heaven !  
 Elysian city which to calm inchantest  
     The mutinous air and sea : they round thee, even  
     As sleep round Love, are driven !  
 Metropolis of a ruined Paradise  
     Long lost, late won, and yet but half regained !  
 Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice,  
     Which armèd Victory offers up unstained  
     To Love, the flower-enchained !  
 Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be,  
 Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,  
     If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail,  
         Hail, hail, all hail !

STROPHE  $\beta$ . 2.

    Thou youngest giant birth  
     Which from the groaning earth  
 Leap'st, clothed in armour of impenetrable scale !  
     Last of the Intercessors !  
     Who 'gainst the Crowned Transgressors  
 Pleadest before God's love ! Arrayed in Wisdom's  
     mail,  
     Wave thy lightning lance in mirth  
     Nor let thy high heart fail,  
 Though from their hundred gates the leagued  
     Oppressors,  
     With hurried legions move !  
         Hail, hail, all hail !

ANTISTROPHE *α.*

What though Cimmerian Anarchs dare blaspheme  
 Freedom and thee? thy shield is as a mirror  
 To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam  
 To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer;  
     A new Actæon's error  
 Shall their's have been—devoured by their own  
     hounds!  
 Be thou like the imperial Basilisk  
 Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds!  
 Gaze on oppression, till at that dread risk  
 Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk:  
 Fear not, but gaze—for freemen mightier grow,  
 And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe;  
 If Hope and Truth and Justice may avail,  
 Thou shalt be great.—All hail!

ANTISTROPHE *β. 2.*

From Freedom's form divine,  
 From Nature's inmost shrine,  
 Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by veil:  
     O'er Ruin desolate,  
     O'er Falsehood's fallen state,  
 Sit thou sublime, unawed; be the Destroyer pale!  
     And equal laws be thine,  
     And wingèd words let sail,  
 Freightèd with truth even from the throne of God:  
     That wealth, surviving fate,  
     Be thine.—All hail!

ANTISTROPHE *α. γ.*

Didst thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling  
     pæan  
 From land to land re-echoed solemnly,  
 Till silence became music? From the Ææan  
     To the cold Alps, eternal Italy  
     Starts to hear thine ! The Sea  
 Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs  
     In light and music ; widowed Genoa wan  
 By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,  
     Murmuring, where is Doria ? fair Milan,  
     Within whose veins long ran  
 The viper's palsying venom, lifts her heel  
 To bruise his head. The signal and the seal  
     (If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail)  
 Art Thou of all these hopes.—O hail !

ANTISTROPHE *β. γ.*

Florence ! beneath the sun,  
     Of cities fairest one,  
 Blushes within her bower for Freedom's expectation :  
     From eyes of quenchless hope  
     Rome tears the priestly cope,  
 As ruling once by power, so now by admiration,  
     As athlete stript to run  
     From a remoter station  
 For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore :—  
     As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail,  
     So now may Fraud and Wrong ! O hail !



EPODE I. *β*.

Hear ye the march as of the Earth-born Forms  
     Arrayed against the ever-living Gods?  
 The crash and darkness of a thousand storms  
     Bursting their inaccessible abodes  
         Of crags and thunder clouds?  
 See ye the banners blazoned to the day,  
     Inwrought with emblems of barbaric pride?  
 Dissonant threats kill Silence far away,  
     The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden wide  
         With iron light is dyed,  
 The Anarchs of the North lead forth their legions  
     Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating;  
 An hundred tribes nourished on strange religions  
 And lawless slaveries,—down the ærial regions  
     Of the white Alps, desolating,  
     Famished wolves that bide no waiting,  
 Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory,  
 Trampling our columned cities into dust,  
     Their dull and savage lust  
     On Beauty's corse to sickness satiating—  
 They come! The fields they tread look black and  
     hoary  
 With fire—from their red feet the streams run gory!

EPODE II. *β*.

    Great Spirit, deepest Love!  
     Which rulest and dost move  
 All things which live and are, within the Italian shore;  
     Who spreadest heaven around it,  
     Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;

Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor,  
 Spirit of beauty ! at whose soft command

The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison

From the Earth's bosom chill ;

O bid those beams be each a blinding brand

Of lightning ! bid those showers be dews of poison !

Bid the Earth's plenty kill !

Bid thy bright Heaven above, <sup>^</sup>^

Whilst light and darkness bound it,

Be their tomb who planned

To make it ours and thine !

Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill

And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon

Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire—

Be man's high hope and unextinct desire,

The instrument to work thy will divine !

Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes from  
 leopards,

And frowns and fears from Thee,

Would not more swiftly flee

Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian shepherds.—

Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine

Thou yieldest or withholdest, Oh let be

This city of thy worship ever free !

*August 25, 1820.*

## GREECE TO SLAVERY.

LET there be light ! said Liberty,  
 And like sunrise from the sea,  
 Athens arose !—Around her born,  
 Shone like mountains in the morn  
 Glorious states ;—and are they now  
 Ashes, wrecks, oblivion ? Go,  
 Where Thermæ and Asopus swallowed  
 Persia, as the sand does foam.  
 Deluge upon deluge followed,  
 Discord, Macedon, and Rome :  
 And lastly thou ! Temples and towers,  
 Citadels and marts, and they  
 Who live and die there, have been ours,  
 And may be thine, and must decay ;  
 But Greece and her foundations are  
 Built below the tide of war,  
 Based on the chrystalline sea  
 Of thought and its eternity ;  
 Her citizens, imperial spirits,  
 Rule the present from the past,  
 On all this world of men inherits  
 Their seal is set.

*Hellas.*

## CHORUS.

In the great morning of the world,  
 The spirit of God with might unfurl'd  
 The flag of Freedom over Chaos;  
     And all its banded anarchs fled,  
 Like vultures frighted from Imaus,  
     Before an earthquake's tread.—  
 So from Time's tempestuous dawn  
 Freedom's splendour burst and shone:—  
 Thermopylæ and Marathon  
 Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,  
     The springing Fire.—The wingèd glory  
 On Philippi half alighted,  
     Like an eagle on a promontory.  
 Its unwearied wings could fan  
 The quenchless ashes of Milan.  
 From age to age, from man to man,  
     It lived; and lit from land to land,  
     Florence, Albion, Switzerland.  
 Then night fell; and, as from night,  
 Re-assuming fiery flight,  
 From the West swift Freedom came,  
     Against the course of Heaven and doom,  
 A second sun arrayed in flame,  
     To burn, to kindle, to illume.  
 From far Atlantis its young beams  
 Chased the shadows and the dreams.  
 France, with all her sanguine steams,

Hid, but quench'd it not ; again  
 Through clouds its shafts of glory rain  
 From utmost Germany to Spain.  
 As an eagle fed with morning  
 Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,  
 When she seeks her aërie hanging  
 In the mountain-cedar's hair,  
 And her brood expect the clanging  
 Of her wings through the wild air,  
 Sick with famine :—Freedom, so  
 To what of Greece remaineth now  
 Returns ; her hoary ruins glow  
 Like orient mountains lost in day ;  
 Beneath the safety of her wings  
 Her renovated nurslings prey,  
 And in the naked lightnings  
 Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.  
 Let Freedom leave—where'er she flies,  
 A Desart, or a Paradise :  
 Let the beautiful and the brave  
 Share her glory, or a grave.

*Hellas.*

## CHORUS.

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever  
 From creation to decay,  
 Like the bubbles on a river  
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away.  
 But they are still immortal  
 Who, through birth's orient portal  
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,  
 Clothe their unceasing flight  
 In the brief dust and light  
 Gather'd around their chariots as they go ;  
 New shapes they still may weave,  
 New gods, new laws receive,  
 Bright or dim are they as the robes they last  
 On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,  
 A Promethean conqueror came ;  
 Like a triumphal path he trod  
 The thorns of death and shame.  
 A mortal shape to him  
 Was like the vapour dim  
 Which the orient planet animates with light ;  
 Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,  
 Like blood-hounds mild and tame,  
 Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight ;  
 The moon of Mahomet  
 Arose, and it shall set :  
 While blazoned as on heaven's immortal noon  
 The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep  
From one whose dreams are Paradise  
Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,  
And day peers forth with her blank eyes ;  
So fleet, so faint, so fair,  
The Powers of earth and air  
Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem :  
Apollo, Pan, and Love,  
And even Olympian Jove  
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them ;  
Our hills and seas and streams  
Dispeopled of their dreams,  
Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,  
Wailed for the golden years.

*Hellas.*

## CHORUS.

The world's great age begins anew,  
 The golden years return,  
 The earth doth like a snake renew  
 Her winter weeds outworn :  
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,  
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
 From waves serener far ;  
 A new Peneus rolls his fountains  
 Against the morning-star.  
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep  
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,  
 Fraught with a later prize ;  
 Another Orpheus sings again,  
 And loves, and weeps, and dies.  
 A new Ulysses leaves once more  
 Calypso for his native shore.

O, write no more the tale of Troy,  
 If earth Death's scroll must be !  
 Nor mix with Laian rage the joy  
 Which dawns upon the free :  
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew  
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.



Another Athens shall arise,  
 And to remoter time  
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
 The splendour of its prime ;  
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,  
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose  
 Shall burst, more bright and good  
 Than all who fell, than One who rose,  
 Than many unsubdued :  
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
 But votive tears and symbol flowers.

O cease ! must hate and death return ?  
 Cease ! must men kill and die ?  
 Cease ! drain not to its dregs the urn  
 Of bitter prophecy.  
 The world is weary of the past,  
 O might it die or rest at last !

*Hellas.*

THE NEW WORLD.

DEMOGORGON.

THOU, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,  
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,  
Beautiful orb ! gathering as thou dost roll  
The love which paves thy path along the skies :

THE EARTH.

I hear : I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth  
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee ;  
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth  
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony ;

THE MOON.

I hear : I am a leaf shaken by thee !

DEMOGORGON.

Ye kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,  
Ætherial Dominations, who possess  
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes  
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness :

A VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye happy dead, whom beams of brightest verse  
Are clouds to hide, not colours to pourtray,  
Whether your nature is that universe  
Which once ye saw and suffered—

A VOICE FROM BENEATH.

Or as they  
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes  
From man's high mind even to the central stone  
Of sullen lead ; from Heaven's star-fretted domes  
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on :

A CONFUSED VOICE.

We hear : thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON.

Spirits, whose homes are flesh : ye beasts and birds,  
Ye worms, and fish ; ye living leaves and buds ;  
Lightning and wind ; and ye untameable herds,  
 Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes :

A VOICE.

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave ;  
 A dupe and a deceiver ; a decay ;  
 A traveller from the cradle to the grave.  
 Through the dim night of this immortal day :

ALL.

Speak : thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

This is the day, which down the void abysm  
 At the Earth-born's spell-yawns for Heaven's despotism,  
 And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep :  
 Love, from its awful throne of patient power  
 In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour  
 Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,  
 And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs  
 And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,  
 These are the seals of that most firm assurance,  
 Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength ;  
 And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,  
 Mother of many acts and hours, should free  
 The serpent that would clasp her with his length :  
 These are the spells by which to re-assume  
 An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ;  
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;  
 To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;  
 To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates  
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;  
 Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ;  
 This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
 Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;  
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

*Prom. Unbound.* 1820.

LIFE may change, but it may fly not ;  
 Hope may vanish, but can die not ;  
 Truth be veil'd, but still it burneth ;  
 Love repulsed,—but it returneth !

Yet were Life a charnel where  
 Hope lay coffin'd with Despair ;  
 Yet were truth a sacred lie,  
 Love were lust—if Liberty

Lent not life its soul of light,  
 Hope its iris of delight,  
 Truth its prophet's robe to wear,  
 Love its power to give and bear.

*Hellas.*

# The Sensitive Plant,

## PART FIRST.

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,  
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,  
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,  
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,  
Like the Spirit of Love felt every where ;  
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss  
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,  
Like a doe in the noon-tide with love's sweet want,  
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snow-drop, and then the violet,  
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,  
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent  
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,  
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,  
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,  
Till they die of their own dear loveliness ;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,  
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,  
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen  
Through their pavilions of tender green ;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,  
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew  
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,  
It was felt like an odour within the sense ;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addrest,  
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,  
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air  
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare :

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,  
As a Mænad, its moonlight-coloured cup,  
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,  
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky ;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberosé,  
The sweetest flower for scent that blows ;  
And all rare blossoms from every clime  
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom  
Was pranked under boughs of embowering blossom,  
With golden and green light, slanting through  
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water lilies lay tremulously,  
And starry river-buds glimmered by,  
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance  
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,  
Which led through the garden along and across,  
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,  
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells  
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,  
And flowrets which drooping as day drooped too  
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,  
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise  
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes  
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet  
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it,)

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,  
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,  
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one  
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun ;

For each one was interpenetrated  
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,  
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear  
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit  
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,  
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,  
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower ;  
Radiance and odour are not its dower ;  
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,  
It desires what it has not, the beautiful !



The light winds which from unsustaining wings  
Shed the music of many murmurings ;  
The beams which dart from many a star  
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar ;

The plumèd insects swift and free,  
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,  
Laden with light and odour, which pass  
Over the gleam of the living grass ;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie  
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,  
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,  
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears ;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,  
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,  
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,  
Move, as reeds in a single stream ;

Each and all like ministering angels were  
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,  
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by  
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,  
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,  
And delight, tho' less bright, was far more deep,  
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were  
drowned

In an ocean of dreams without a sound ;  
Whose waves never mark, tho' they ever impress  
The light sand which paves it, consciousness ;

(Only over head the sweet nightingale  
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,  
And snatches of its Elysian chant  
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant).

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest  
Up-gathered into the bosom of rest ;  
A sweet child weary of its delight ;  
The feeblest and yet the favourite,  
Cradled within the embrace of night.

#### PART SECOND.

There was a Power in this sweet place,  
An Eve in this Eden ; a ruling grace  
Which to the flowers did they waken or dream,  
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,  
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind  
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion  
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even :  
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,  
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,  
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth !

She had no companion of mortal race,  
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face  
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes  
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise ;

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake  
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,  
As if yet around her he lingering were,  
Tho' the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it prest ;  
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,  
That the coming and going of the wind  
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,  
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod  
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,  
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet  
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet ;  
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came  
From her glowing fingers thro' all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream  
On those that were faint with the sunny beam ;  
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers  
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,  
And sustained them with rods and ozier bands ;  
If the flowers had been her own infants she  
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,  
And things of obscene and unlovely forms  
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,  
Into the rough woods far aloof,

In a basket, of grasses and wild flowers full,  
The freshest her gentle hands could pull  
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,  
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris  
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss  
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she  
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,  
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,  
She left clinging round the smooth and dark  
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring  
Thus moved through the garden ministering  
All the sweet season of summer tide,  
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died !

### PART THIRD.

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,  
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,  
Or the waves of Baiæ, ere luminous  
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant  
Felt the sound of the funeral chaunt,  
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,  
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low ;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,  
And the silent motions of passing death,  
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,  
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank ;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,  
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass ;  
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,  
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,  
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,  
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,  
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap  
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,  
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,  
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,  
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,  
Paved the turf and the moss below.  
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,  
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue  
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew.  
Leaf after leaf, day after day,  
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and grey, and red,  
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,  
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind past ;  
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds  
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,  
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,  
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet  
Fell from the stalks on which they were set ;  
And the eddies drove them here and there,  
As the winds did those of the upper air,

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks,  
Were bent and tangled across the walks ;  
And the leafless net-work of parasite bowers  
Massed into ruin ; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,  
All loathliest weeds began to grow,  
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,  
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,  
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,  
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,  
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,  
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,  
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,  
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics and fungi, with mildew and mould  
Started like mist from the wet ground cold ;  
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead  
With a spirit of growth had been animated !

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,  
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,  
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,  
Infecting the winds that wander by.

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,  
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb  
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes  
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,  
The vapours arose which have strength to kill :  
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,  
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray  
Crept and flitted in broad noon-day  
Unseen ; every branch on which they alit  
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant like one forbid  
Wept, and the tears within each lid  
Of its folded leaves which together grew  
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon  
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn ;  
The sap shrank to the root through every pore  
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came : the wind was his whip :  
One choppy finger was on his lip :  
He had torn the cataracts from the hills  
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles ;

His breath was a chain which without a sound  
The earth, and the air, and the water bound ;  
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne  
By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death  
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath,  
Their decay and sudden flight from frost  
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost !

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant  
The moles and the dormice died for want :  
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air  
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain  
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again,  
Then there steamed up a freezing dew  
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew ;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about  
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,  
Shook the boughs thus laden and heavy and stiff,  
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came back  
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck ;  
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and  
    darnels,  
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.



## CONCLUSION.

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that  
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat  
Ere its outward form had known decay,  
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that lady's gentle mind,  
No longer with the form combined  
Which scattered love, as stars do light,  
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess ; but in this life  
Of error, ignorance, and strife,  
Where nothing is, but all things seem,  
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet  
Pleasant if one considers it,  
To own that death itself must be,  
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,  
And all sweet shapes and odours there,  
In truth have never past away :  
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed ; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,  
There is no death nor change : their might  
Exceeds our organs, which endure  
No light, being themselves obscure.

## Last Love Poems.

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TO EDWARD WILLIAMS.

THE serpent is shut out from paradise.  
The wounded deer must seek the herb no more  
In which its heart-cure lies :  
The widowed dove must cease to haunt a bower  
Like that from which its mate with feignèd sighs  
Fled in the April hour.  
I too must seldom seek again  
Near happy friends a mitigated pain.

Of hatred I am proud,—with scorn content ;  
Indifference, that once hurt me, now is grown  
Itself indifferent.  
But, not to speak of love, pity alone  
Can break a spirit already more than bent.  
The miserable one  
Turns the mind's poison into food,—  
Its medicine is tears,—its evil good.

Therefore, if now I see you seldomer,  
Dear friends, dear *friend* ! know that I only fly  
Your looks, because they stir  
Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot  
die :

The very comfort that they minister  
I scarce can bear, yet I,  
So deeply is the arrow gone,  
Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

When I return to my cold home, you ask  
Why I am not as I have ever been.  
*You* spoil me for the task  
Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene,—  
Of wearing on my brow the idle mask  
Of author, great or mean,  
In the world's carnival. I sought  
Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

Full half an hour, to-day, I tried my lot  
With various flowers, and every one still said,  
"She loves me——loves me not."  
And if this meant a vision long since fled—  
If it meant fortune, fame, or peace of thought—  
If it meant,—but I dread  
To speak what you may know too well :  
Still there was truth in the sad oracle.

The crane o'er seas and forests seeks her home ;  
No bird so wild but has its quiet nest,  
When it no more would roam ;  
The sleepless billows on the ocean's breast  
Break like a bursting heart, and die in foam,  
And thus at length find rest.  
Doubtless there is a place of peace  
Where *my* weak heart and all its throbs will cease

I asked her, yesterday, if she believed  
 That I had resolution. One who *had*  
 Would ne'er have thus relieved  
 His heart with words,—but what his judgment  
 :                bade  
 Would do, and leave the scorner unrelieved.  
 These verses are too sad  
 To send to you, but that I know,    A  
 Happy yourself, you feel another's woe.

1821.

## SONG.

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,  
 Spirit of Delight !  
 Wherefore hast thou left me now  
 Many a day and night ?  
 Many a weary night and day  
 'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me  
 Win thee back again ?  
 With the joyous and the free  
 Thou wilt scoff at pain.  
 Spirit false ! thou hast forgot  
 All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade  
 Of a trembling leaf,  
 Thou with sorrow art dismayed ;  
 Even the sighs of grief  
 Reproach thee, that thou art not near,  
 And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty  
    To a merry measure,  
Thou wilt never come for pity,  
    Thou wilt come for pleasure.  
Pity then will cut away  
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest,  
    Spirit of Delight !  
The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,  
    And the starry night ;  
Autumn evening, and the morn  
When the golden mists are born.

I love snow, and all the forms  
    Of the radiant frost ;  
I love waves, and winds, and storms,  
    Every thing almost  
Which is Nature's, and may be  
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,  
    And such society  
As is quiet, wise and good ;  
    Between thee and me  
What difference ? but thou dost possess  
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love—though he has wings,  
    And like light can flee,  
But above all other things,  
    Spirit, I love thee—  
Thou art love and life ! O come,  
Make once more my heart thy home.

## A LAMENT.

OH, world ! oh, life ! oh, time !  
On whose last steps I climb  
Trembling at that where I had stood before ;  
When will return the glory of your prime ?  
No more—O, never more !

Out of the day and night  
A joy has taken flight ;  
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,  
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight  
No more—O, never more !

1821.

## A DIRGE.

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud  
Grief too sad for song ;  
Wild wind, when sullen cloud  
Knells all the night long ;  
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,  
Bare woods, whose branches stain,  
Deep caves and dreary main,  
Wail, for the world's wrong !

1822.

TO ———.

ONE word is too often profaned  
For me to profane it,  
One feeling too falsely disdained  
For thee to disdain it.  
One hope is too like despair  
For prudence to smother,  
And pity from thee more dear  
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,  
But wilt thou accept not  
The worship the heart lifts above  
And the Heavens reject not,  
The desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,  
The devotion to something afar  
From the sphere of our sorrow?

1821.

LINES.

WHEN the lamp is shattered  
The light in the dust lies dead—  
When the cloud is scattered  
The rainbow's glory is shed.  
When the lute is broken,  
Sweet tones are remembered not;  
When the lips have spoken,  
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour  
 Survive not the lamp and the lute,  
 The heart's echoes render  
 No song when the spirit is mute :—  
 No song but sad dirges,  
 Like the wind through a ruined cell,  
 Or the mournful surges  
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled  
 Love first leaves the well-built nest,  
 The weak one is singled  
 To endure what it once possest.  
 O, Love ! who bewailest  
 The frailty of all things here,  
 Why choose you the frailest  
 For your cradle, your home and your bier ?

Its passions will rock thee  
 As the storms rock the ravens on high :  
 Bright reason will mock thee,  
 Like the sun from a wintry sky.  
 From thy nest every rafter  
 Will rot, and thine eagle home  
 Leave thee naked to laughter,  
 When leaves fall and cold winds come.

1822

TO ———.

WHEN passion's trance is overpast,  
 If tenderness and truth could last  
 Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep  
 Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,  
 I should not weep, I should not weep !



It were enough to feel, to see,  
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,  
And dream the rest—and burn and be  
The secret food of fires unseen,  
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

After the slumber of the year  
The woodland violets re-appear,  
All things revive in field or grove,  
And sky and sea, but two, which move,  
And form all others, life and love.

1821

## WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE.

ARIEL to Miranda.—Take  
This slave of Music, for the sake  
Of him who is the slave of thee,  
And teach it all the harmony  
In which thou canst, and only thou,  
Make the delighted spirit glow,  
Till joy denies itself again,  
And, too intense, is turned to pain ;  
For by permission and command  
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,  
Poor Ariel sends this silent token  
Of more than ever can be spoken ;  
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,  
From life to life, must still pursue  
Your happiness ;—for thus alone  
Can Ariel ever find his own.  
From Prospero's enchanted cell,  
As the mighty verses tell,

To the throne of Naples, he  
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,  
Flitting on, your prow before,  
Like a living meteor.  
When you die, the silent Moon  
In her interlunar swoon,  
Is not sadder in her cell  
Than deserted Ariel.  
When you live again on earth,  
Like an unseen star of birth,  
Ariel guides you o'er the sea  
Of life from your nativity.  
Many changes have been run,  
Since Ferdinand and you begun  
Your course of love, and Ariel still  
Has tracked your steps, and served your will ;  
Now, in humbler, happier lot,  
This is all remembered not ;  
And now, alas ! the poor sprite is  
Imprisoned, for some fault of his,  
In a body like a grave ;—  
From you he only dares to crave,  
For his service and his sorrow,  
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,  
To echo all harmonious thought,  
Felled a tree, while on the steep  
The woods were in their winter sleep,  
Rocked in that repose divine  
On the wind-swept Apennine ;  
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,  
And some of Spring approaching fast,

And some of April buds and showers,  
And some of songs in July bowers,  
And all of love ; and so this tree, —  
O that such our death may be !—  
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,  
To live in happier form again :  
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,  
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,  
And taught it justly to reply,  
To all who question skilfully,  
In language gentle as thine own ;  
Whispering in enamoured tone  
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,  
And summer winds in sylvan cells ;  
For it had learnt all harmonies  
Of the plains and of the skies,  
Of the forests and the mountains,  
And the many-voicèd fountains ;  
The clearest echoes of the hills,  
The softest notes of falling rills,  
The melodies of birds and bees,  
The murmuring of summer seas,  
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,  
And airs of evening ; and it knew  
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,  
Which, driven on its diurnal round,  
As it floats through boundless day,  
Our world enkindles on its way—  
All this it knows, but will not tell  
To those who cannot question well  
The spirit that inhabits it ;  
It talks according to the wit  
Of its companions ; and no more

Is heard than has been felt before,  
By those who tempt it to betray  
These secrets of an elder day :  
But sweetly as its answers will  
Flatter hands of perfect skill,  
It keeps its highest, holiest tone  
For our belovèd Jane alone.

1822

## TO JANE—THE INVITATION.

BEST and brightest, come away !  
Fairer far than this fair Day,  
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,  
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow  
To the rough Year just awake  
In its cradle on the brake.  
The brightest hour of unborn Spring,  
Through the winter wandering,  
Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn  
To hoar February born ;  
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,  
It kissed the forehead of the Earth,  
And smiled upon the silent sea,  
And bade the frozen streams be free,  
And waked to music all their fountains,  
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,  
And like a prophetess of May  
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,  
Making the wintry world appear  
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,  
To the wild wood and the downs—  
To the silent wilderness  
Where the soul need not repress  
Its music lest it should not find  
An echo in another's mind,  
While the touch of Nature's art  
Harmonizes heart to heart.

Radiant Sister of the Day,  
Awake ! arise ! and come away !  
To the wild woods and the plains,  
And the pools where winter rains  
Image all their roof of leaves,  
Where the pine its garland weaves  
Of sapless green and ivy dun  
Round stems that never kiss the sun ;  
Where the lawns and pastures be,  
And the sandhills of the sea ;—  
Where the melting hoar-frost wets  
The daisy-star that never sets,  
And wind-flowers, and violets,  
Which yet join not scent to hue,  
Crown the pale year weak and new ;  
When the night is left behind  
In the deep east, dun and blind,  
And the blue noon is over us,  
And the multitudinous  
Billows murmur at our feet,  
Where the earth and ocean meet,  
And all things seem only one  
In the universal sun.

1822.

## TO JANE—THE RECOLLECTION.

Now the last day of many days,  
All beautiful and bright as thou,  
The loveliest and the last, is dead,  
Rise, Memory, and write its praise !  
Up to thy wonted work ! come, trace  
The epitaph of glory fled,—  
For now the Earth has changed its face,  
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

We wandered to the pine forest  
That skirts the Ocean's foam,  
The lightest wind was in its nest,  
The tempest in its home.  
The whispering waves were half asleep,  
The clouds were gone to play,  
And on the bosom of the deep,  
The smile of Heaven lay ;  
It seemed as if the hour were one  
Sent from beyond the skies,  
Which scattered from above the sun  
A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the pines that stood  
The giants of the waste,  
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude  
As serpents interlaced,  
And soothed by every azure breath,  
That under heaven is blown,  
To harmonies and hues beneath,  
As tender as its own ;

Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,  
Like green waves on the sea,  
As still as in the silent deep  
The ocean woods may be.

How calm it was !—the silence there  
By such a chain was bound  
That even the busy woodpecker  
Made stiller by her sound  
The inviolable quietness ;  
The breath of peace we drew  
With its soft motion made not less  
The calm that round us grew.  
There seemed from the remotest sea  
Of the white mountain waste,  
To the soft flower beneath our feet,  
A magic circle traced,—

A spirit interfused around,  
A thrilling silent life,  
To momentary peace it bound  
Our mortal nature's strife ;—  
And still I felt the centre of  
The magic circle there,  
Was one fair form that filled with love  
The lifeless atmosphere.

We paused beside the pools that lie  
Under the forest bough,  
Each seemed as 'twere a little sky  
Gulphed in a world below ;  
A firmament of purple light,  
Which in the dark earth lay,

More boundless than the depth of night,  
And purer than the day—  
In which the lovely forests grew  
As in the upper air,  
More perfect both in shape and hue  
Than any spreading there.

There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn,  
And through the dark green wood  
The white sun twinkling like the dawn  
Out of a speckled cloud.  
Sweet views which in our world above  
Can never well be seen,  
Were imaged by the water's love  
Of that fair forest green.  
And all was interfused beneath  
With an elysian glow,  
An atmosphere without a breath,  
A softer day below.

Like one beloved the scene had lent  
To the dark water's breast;  
Its every leaf and lineament  
With more than truth exprest ;  
Until an envious wind crept by,  
Like an unwelcome thought,  
Which from the mind's too faithful eye  
Blots one dear image out.  
Though thou art ever fair and kind,  
The forests ever green,  
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,  
Than calm in waters seen.



## REMEMBRANCE.

SWIFTER far than summer's flight—  
Swifter far than youth's delight—  
Swifter far than happy night,

Art thou come and gone—  
As the wood when leaves are shed,  
As the night when sleep is fled,  
As the heart when joy is dead,  
I am left lone, alone.

The swallow summer comes again—  
The owlet night resumes his reign—  
But the wild-swan youth is fain  
To fly with thee, false as thou.—  
My heart each day desires the morrow ;  
Sleep itself is turned to sorrow ;  
Vainly would my winter borrow  
Sunny leaves from any bough.

Lilies for a bridal bed—  
Roses for a matron's head—  
Violets for a maiden dead—  
Pansies let *my* flowers be :  
On the living grave I bear  
Scatter them without a tear—  
Let no friend, however dear,  
Waste one hope, one fear for me.

## LINES WRITTEN IN THE BAY OF LERICI.

SHE left me at the silent time  
When the moon had ceased to climb  
The azure path of Heaven's steep,  
And like an albatross asleep,  
Balanced on her wings of light,  
Hovered in the purple night,  
Ere she sought her ocean nest  
In the chambers of the West.  
She left me, and I staid alone  
Thinking over every tone  
Which, though silent to the ear,  
The enchanted heart could hear,  
Like notes which die when born, but still  
Haunt the echoes of the hill ;  
And feeling ever—O too much !—  
The soft vibration of her touch,  
As if her gentle hand, even now,  
Lightly trembled on my brow ;  
And thus, although she absent were,  
Memory gave me all of her  
That even Fancy dares to claim :—  
Her presence had made weak and tame  
All passions, and I lived alone  
In the time which is our own ;  
The past and future were forgot,  
As they had been, and would be, not.  
But soon, the guardian angel gone,  
The dæmon reassumed his throne  
In my faint heart. I dare not speak  
My thoughts, but thus disturbed and weak

I sat and saw the vessels glide  
Over the ocean bright and wide,  
Like spirit-wingèd chariots sent  
O'er some serenest element  
For ministrations strange and far ;  
As if to some Elysian star  
Sailed for drink to medicine  
Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.  
And the wind that winged their flight  
From the land came fresh and light,  
And the scent of wingèd flowers,  
And the coolness of the hours  
Of dew, and sweet warmth left by day,  
Were scattered o'er the twinkling bay.  
And the fisher with his lamp  
And spear about the low rocks damp  
Crept, and struck the fish which came  
To worship the delusive flame.  
Too happy they, whose pleasure sought  
Extinguishes all sense and thought  
Of the regret that pleasure leaves,  
Destroying life alone, not peace !

1822.

TO —

MUSIC, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory ;  
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken ;  
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,  
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed ;  
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,  
Love itself shall slumber on.

1821.

## Adonais ;

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS.

*Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἑλαμπες ἐνὶ ζώοισιν ἔῳος.  
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.*

PLATO.

### PREFACE.

IT is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled, prove, at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of Hyperion as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821 ; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses, was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful ; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder, if its young flower was blighted in

the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics, of the true greatness of his powers, were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said, that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one, like Keats's, composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates, is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to "*Endymion*;" was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, "*Paris*," and "*Woman*," and a "*Syrian Tale*," and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men, who in their venal good nature, presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery, dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion*, was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to

Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, "almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of the pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name !

I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead !  
 O, weep for Adonais ! though our tears  
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head !  
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years  
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,  
 And teach them thine own sorrow, say : with me  
 Died Adonais ; till the Future dares  
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be  
 An echo and a light unto eternity !

Where wert thou mighty Mother, when he lay,  
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies  
 In darkness ? where was lorn Urania  
 When Adonais died ? With veiled eyes,  
 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise  
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,  
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,  
 With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,  
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

O, weep for Adonais—he is dead !  
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep !  
Yet wherefore ? Quench within their burning bed  
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep  
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep ;  
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair  
Descend ;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep  
Will yet restore him to the vital air ;  
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our  
despair.

Most musical of mourners, weep again !  
Lament anew, Urania !—He died,  
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,  
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,  
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,  
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite  
Of lust and blood ; he went, unterrified,  
Into the gulf of death ; but his clear Sprite  
Yet reigns o'er earth ; the third among the sons of  
light.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew !  
Not all to that bright station dared to climb ;  
And happier they their happiness who knew,  
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time  
In which suns perished ; others more sublime,  
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,  
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime ;  
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,  
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene  
abode.

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,  
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,  
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,  
And fed with true love tears, instead of dew ;  
Most musical of mourners, weep anew !  
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,  
The bloom, whose petals nipt before they blew  
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste ;  
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death  
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,  
He came ; and bought, with price of purest breath,  
A grave among the eternal.—Come away !  
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day  
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof ! while still  
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay ;  
Awake him not ! surely he takes his fill  
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never more !—  
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace,  
The shadow of white Death, and at the door  
Invisible Corruption waits to trace  
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place ;  
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe  
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface  
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law  
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

O, weep for Adonais !—The quick Dreams,  
The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,  
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams  
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught



The love which was its music, wander not,—  
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,  
But droop there, whence they sprung ; and mourn  
their lot

Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,  
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again,

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,  
And fans him with her moonlight wings and cries ;  
“ Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead ;  
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,  
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies  
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.”  
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise !

She knew not 'twas her own ; as with no stain  
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew  
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them ;  
Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw  
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,  
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem ;  
Another in her wilful grief would break  
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem  
A greater loss with one which was more weak ;  
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,  
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath  
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,  
And pass into the panting heart beneath

With lightning and with music : the damp death  
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips ;  
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath  
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,  
It flushed through his pale limbs, and past to its  
eclipse.

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,  
Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,  
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarna-  
tions  
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies ;  
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,  
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam  
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,  
Came in slow pomp ;—the moving pomp might seem  
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,  
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,  
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought  
Her eastern watchtower, and her hair unbound,  
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,  
Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day ;  
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,  
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,  
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,  
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,  
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,  
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,

Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day ;  
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear  
Than those for whose disdain she pined away  
Into a shadow of all sounds :—a drear  
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw  
down  
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
Or they dead leaves ; since her delight is flown  
For whom should she have waked the sullen year ?  
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear  
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
Thou Adonais : wan they stand and sere  
Amid the faint companions of their youth,  
With dew all turned to tears ; odour, to sighing ruth.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale  
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;  
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale  
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain  
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,  
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,  
As Albion wails for thee : the curse of Cain  
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,  
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest !

Ah woe is me ! Winter is come and gone,  
But grief returns with the revolving year ;  
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;  
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear ;  
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons'  
bier ;

The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
 And build their mossy homes in field and brere ;  
 And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

Through wood and stream and field and hill and  
 Ocean  
 A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst  
 As it has ever done, with change and motion,  
 From the great morning of the world when first  
 God dawned on Chaos ; in its steam immersed  
 The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light ;  
 All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst ;  
 Diffuse themselves ; and spend in love's delight,  
 The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender  
 Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath ;  
 Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour  
 Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death  
 And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath ;  
 Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which  
 knows  
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath  
 By sightless lightning ?—th' intense atom glows  
 A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

Alas ! that all we loved of him should be,  
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,  
 And grief itself be mortal ! Woe is me !  
 Whence are we, and why are we ? of what scene  
 The actors or spectators ? Great and mean

Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.

As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,  
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,  
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

*He* will awake no more, oh, never more !  
“Wake thou,” cried Misery, “childless Mother, rise  
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart’s core,  
A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs,”  
And all the Dreams that watched Urania’s eyes,  
And all the Echoes whom their sister’s song  
Had held in holy silence, cried : “Arise !”  
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,  
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs  
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear  
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,  
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,  
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear  
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania ;  
So saddened round her like an atmosphere  
Of stormy mist ; so swept her on her way  
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,  
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and  
steel,  
And human hearts, which to her aery tread  
Yielding not, wounded the invisible  
Palms of her tender feet where’er they fell :

And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than  
they

Rent the soft Form they never could repel,  
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May  
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

In the death chamber for a moment Death  
Shamed by the presence of that living Might  
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath  
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light  
Flashed through those limbs, so late her deardelight.  
“Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,  
As silent lightning leaves the starless night !  
Leave me not !” cried Urania : her distress  
Roused Death : Death rose and smiled, and met her  
vain caress.

“Stay yet awhile ! speak to me once again ;  
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live ;  
And in my heartless breast and burning brain  
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,  
With food of saddest memory kept alive,  
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part  
Of thee, my Adonais ! I would give  
All that I am to be as thou now art !  
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart !

“Oh gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,  
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men  
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart  
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den ?  
Defenceless as thou wert, oh where was then  
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear ?  
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when

Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,  
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like  
deer.

“ The herded wolves, bold only to pursue ;  
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead ;  
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true  
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,  
And whose wings rain contagion ;—how they fled,  
When like Apollo, from his golden bow,  
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped  
And smiled !—The spoilers tempt no second blow,  
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

“ The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn ;  
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then  
Is gathered into death without a dawn,  
And the immortal stars awake again ;  
So is it in the world of living men :  
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight  
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when  
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light  
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.”

Thus ceased she : and the mountain shepherds came,  
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent ;  
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,  
An early but enduring monument,  
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song  
In sorrow ; from her wilds Ierne sent  
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,  
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,  
 A phantom among men ; companionless  
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm  
 Whose thunder is its knell ; he, as I guess,  
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,  
 Actæon-like, and now he fled astray  
 With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,  
 And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,  
 Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their  
 prey.

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—  
 A Love in desolation masked ;—a Power  
 Girt round with weakness ;—it can scarce uplift  
 The weight of the superincumbent hour ;  
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,  
 A breaking billow ;—even whilst we speak  
 Is it not broken ? On the withering flower  
 The killing sun smiles brightly : on a cheek  
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may  
 break.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,  
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue ;  
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,  
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy tresses grew  
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,  
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart  
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it ; of that  
 crew  
 He came the last, neglected and apart ;  
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.



All stood aloof, and at his partial moan  
Smiled through their tears ; well knew that gentle  
band

Who in another's fate now wept his own ;  
As in the accents of an unknown land,  
He sung new sorrow ; sad Urania scanned  
The Stranger's mien, and murmured : " Who art  
thou ? "

He answered not, but with a sudden hand  
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,  
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—Oh ! that it should  
be so !

What softer voice is hushed over the dead ?  
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown ?  
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,  
In mockery of monumental stone,  
The heavy heart heaving without a moan ?  
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,  
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one ;  
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs  
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh !  
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown  
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe ?  
The nameless worm would now itself disown :  
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone  
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,  
But what was howling in one breast alone,  
Silent with expectation of the song,  
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre  
unstrung.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame !  
Live ! fear no heavier chastisement from me,  
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name !  
- But be thyself, and know thyself to be !  
And ever at thy season be thou free  
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow :  
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee ;  
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,  
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as  
now.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled  
Far from these carrion kites that scream below ;  
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead ;  
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—  
Dust to the dust ! but the pure spirit shall flow  
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,  
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow  
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,  
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of  
shame.

Peace, peace ! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—  
He hath awakened from the dream of life—  
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep  
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife  
Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay  
Like corpses in a charnel ; fear and grief  
Convulse us and consume us day by day,  
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living  
clay.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;  
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
 Can touch him not and torture not again ;  
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
 He is secure, and now can never mourn  
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain ;  
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he ;  
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn  
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee  
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone ;  
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan !  
 Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou  
     Air  
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown  
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare  
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its  
     despair !

He is made one with Nature : there is heard  
 His voice in all her music, from the moan  
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird ;  
 He is a presence to be felt and known  
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move  
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;  
 Which wields the world with never wearied  
     love,  
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

He is a portion of the loveliness  
Which once he made more lovely : he doth bear  
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling  
there,  
All new successions to the forms they wear ;  
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight  
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ;  
And bursting in its beauty and its might  
From trees and beasts and men into the Heavens' light.

The splendours of the firmament of time  
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not ;  
Like stars to their appointed height they climb  
And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,  
And love and life contend in it, for what  
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there  
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy  
air.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown  
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal  
thought,  
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton  
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not  
Yet faded from him ; Sidney, as he fought  
And as he fell and as he lived and loved  
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,  
Arose ; and Lucan, by his death approved :  
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark  
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die  
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,  
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.  
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry,  
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long  
Swung blind in unascended majesty,  
Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.  
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

Who mourns for Adonais? oh come forth  
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.  
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;  
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light  
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might  
Sate the void circumference: then shrink  
Even to a point within our day and night;  
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink  
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the  
brink.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre  
O, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought  
That ages, empires, and religions there  
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;  
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not  
Glory from those who made the world their prey;  
And he is gathered to the kings of thought  
Who waged contention with their time's decay,  
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,  
The grave, the city, and the wilderness ;  
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,  
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress  
The bones of Desolation's nakedness  
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead  
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access  
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead,  
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time  
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand ;  
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,  
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned  
This refuge for his memory, doth stand  
Like flame transformed to marble ; and beneath,  
A field is spread, on which a newer band  
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death  
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished  
breath.

Here pause : these graves are all too young as yet  
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned  
Its charge to each ; and if the seal is set,  
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,  
Break it not thou ! too surely shalt thou find  
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,  
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind  
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.  
What Adonais is, why fear we to become ?

The One remains, the many change and pass ;  
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;  
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
Until Death tramples it to fragments.— Die,  
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !  
Follow where all is fled ! —Rome's azure sky,  
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak  
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart ?  
Thy hopes are gone before : from all things here  
They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart !  
A light is past from the revolving year,  
And man, and woman ; and what still is dear  
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.  
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near ;  
'Tis Adonais calls ! oh, hasten thither,  
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
Which through the web of being blindly wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst ; now beams on me,  
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven,  
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;  
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven !  
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;  
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

1821.



## ODE TO THE WEST WIND.

## I.

O, WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O, thou,  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
With living hues and odours plain and hill :

Wild Spirit, which art moving every where ;  
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, O, hear !

## II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion  
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread  
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,  
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge  
Of the horizon to the zenith's height  
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge  
Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,  
Vaulted with all thy congregated might  
Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere  
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : O, hear !

## III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,  
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,  
Beside a pumice isle in Baïæ's bay,  
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,  
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers  
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou  
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers  
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know  
Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,  
And tremble and despoil themselves : O, hear !

## IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;  
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;  
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
Than thou, O, uncontrollable ! If even  
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,  
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed  
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
Oh ! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !  
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed  
One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

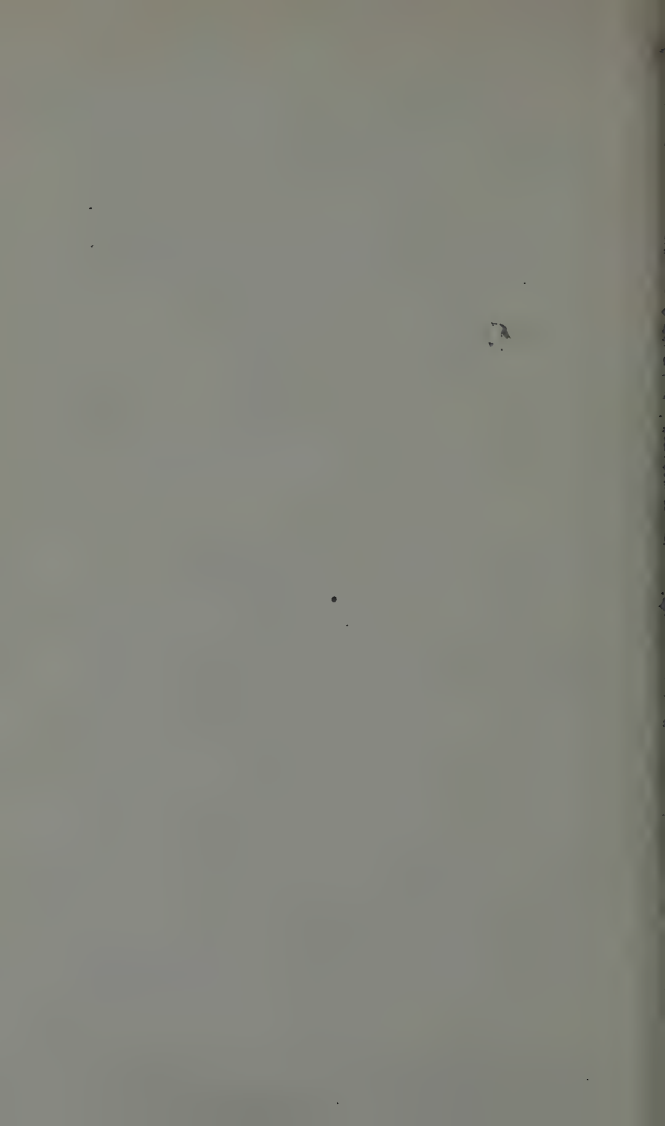
Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :  
What if my leaves are falling like its own !  
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,  
My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !  
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !  
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?



## NOTES.

### NOTE i. p. 1.

THE *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* is placed first in this book, not only because it pictures Shelley's earliest aspirations, but also because Shelley has not added in this hymn, as he has done in other poems, any "mortal image" to his expression of the Platonic doctrine of the love of the Idea of Beauty. To understand the poem the reader ought to refer to that passage in Shelley's translation of the Symposium of Plato which begins—Diotima is represented as speaking:—"Your own meditation, Socrates, might perhaps have initiated you in all these things which I have already taught you on the subject of Love," and continue to the close of the speech of Diotima. See *Essays*, vol. i. pp. 118-122.

### NOTE ii. p. 6.

"Shelley . . . was at a loss for a title, and I proposed that which he adopted—*Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*. The Greek word, ἀλάστωρ, is an evil genius, κακοδαίμων, . . . The poem treated the spirit of solitude as a spirit of evil." This statement of Mr. Peacock's is supported not only by the poem, but also by the Preface, especially by the words—"The poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the Furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin." See also the lines—

"The spirit of sweet human love has sent  
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned  
Her choicest gifts."

## NOTE iii. p. 12.

“ Her voice was like the voice of his own soul  
Heard in the calm of thought.”

The *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* represents the pure Platonic conception of Love, and of that which it loves. In *Alastor*, in *Prince Athanase*, in many of the lyrics, Shelley retreats from this conception, and amalgamating two thoughts in the Symposium, invents a conception of his own. In that dialogue Aristophanes tells an amusing myth of the original human-being divided into man and woman, and of each part of this man-woman ever afterwards passionately seeking the other. The serious element in this is, “that the loves of this world are an indistinct anticipation of an ideal union which is not yet realised,” or perhaps that each human being has its complement, and strives to find it. That is one element in Shelley’s conception. The other is taken from the representation made by Diotima of the lover of absolute Beauty seeking for its image in mortal forms, and his loving of these images when found, as one of the steps whereby he ascends to the love of ideal Beauty. Throwing these two together, Shelley forms a new conception. He conceives of the archetypal Beauty, that Beauty which is the model and source of all other beauty, as embodied somewhere beyond this material world in the other half of his own soul. In visions he sees this Being, and pursues her incessantly, but is always driven by a weakness in his nature to try and find her image in real women. His ideal love continually glides back into a desire of realising itself on earth. He is thus, as he calls himself in *Adonais*, a “power girt round with weakness.” *Alastor* records the coming of the Vision, and the agony of not finding it realised. Unable to be content with the love of Ideal Beauty alone, unable to find it realised to the sense on earth, the poet, beaten between and tortured by these two inabilityes, dies of the pain. *Epipsychidion* records a moment when he thought that he had found realised in Emilia this “soul out of his soul.” Had *Prince Athanase* been finished, it would have recorded the vicissitudes of this pursuit.

The personal element in Love, which is only a step towards the higher Love in Plato, is a distinct part of it in Shelley. And it was his profound feeling of the necessity of this for him that made him create, as part of his idea of Love, an ideal image of his own soul, a heightened, externalised personality of himself, whom he felt in Knowledge, in Woman, and in Nature, and to absolute union with whom, such union as is described in the latter part of *Epipsychidion*, he passionately aspired. But it is best to refer to Shelley himself for this invention, for this addition to the Platonic theory of Love. He expresses it fully enough in his *Essay on Love*. See the sentences beginning "Thou demandest—What is Love?" They illustrate passage after passage in *Alastor* and in the other poems. See, also, verses 3, 4, and 5 of the poem of *The Zucca*.

NOTE iv. p. 18, 19.

There can be no reason for these unearthly and unnatural scenes, except the wish to illustrate a temper of mind as unearthly and unnatural. They are the image of a mind tossed by the waves of impossible desire, and so maddened that only the quiet of death can follow. And so it is. The gentle stream follows, and the profound forest, and the ideal landscape, evening and death.

NOTE v. p. 25.

"On every side now rose  
Rocks which, in unimaginable forms,  
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles  
In the light of evening, and its precipice  
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above  
'Mid toppling stones."

I cannot but think that the easiest explanation of this disputed passage is to read *the* for *its*. The *precipice* is mentioned afterwards in two or three passages, but in these passages it is spoken of as it is seen on the other side of the valley, beyond the gap, where it falls downwards to the

plain. What the poet sees now are, first, the sides of the valley rising with pinnacles of rock ; and, secondly, in front of him, the towering sides sweeping round and closing up the valley in a precipitous curve, which, because it is between him and the descending sun, obscures the ravine where he is walking. This precipice, which shuts in the valley in front of him, opens its stony jaws ('the abrupt mountain breaks'), is *disclosed*, at first *above*, and afterwards below, as he walks on. He then sees the gate of the hills, and passing through it by the side of the stream, among the toppling stones, beholds the mighty landscape far below, in the light of evening and of the descending moon. But I am inclined to think that *its* is right. *Its* may either be carelessly used, as if he had mentioned the mountain, when he has only mentioned rocks, or, by one of those tortuous constructions, not uncommon in Shelley, *its* stands for *its own*—its own precipice obscuring the ravine.

NOTE vi. p. 25.

This wonderful description of a vast landscape is one of the many instances in Shelley of Nature presenting herself to him as she presented herself to the landscape-painter Turner.

NOTE vii. p. 28, last line.

The application of the adjectives has been discussed. But it seems plain enough. It is quite in Shelley's manner, as in the "Ode to the West Wind," in "When the lamp is shattered," and in many other poems, to go back to and bring together his illustrations. Here the poet's frame is a lute, a bright stream, a dream of youth. The lute is still, the stream is dark and dry, the dream is unremembered.

NOTE viii. p. 31, 33.

These two poems are inserted here from their striking the same note as the last scene in *Alastor*.



## NOTE ix. p. 40.

This is part of the introduction of *Hellas*. The first and third verses are sung by a chorus of Greek captive women while Mahmud is sleeping, the second and fourth verses by the Indian slave who sits beside his couch.

## NOTE x. p. 42, 43.

This is a splendid example of that highly wrought painting of cloud and sky in which Shelley stands almost alone among English poets. There are fine examples in Wordsworth and Byron, but they have neither the detail, nor the splendour, nor the subtilty of colour that Shelley puts into his skies. This might be a description of one of Turner's storm skies. The long trains of tremulous mist that precede the tempest, the cleft in the storm-clouds, and seen through it, high above, the space of blue sky, fretted with fair clouds, the pallid semicircle of the moon with mist on its upper horn, the flying rack of clouds below the serene spot—all are as Turner saw them; but painting cannot give what Shelley gives—the growth and progress of the changes of the storm.

## NOTE xi. p. 47.

I have only inserted the *Mask*, and left out its explanation. That explanation, in its two parts, has seemed to me to trouble, as all explanations do, and especially an artist's, the work of art.

## NOTE xii. p. 83.

This is another of those pictured skies in which Shelley excels. They are almost the only aspects of Nature which he sees with absolute clearness, and describes with absolute directness. This could be painted from, but then only Turner could have painted it, or would have cared to paint it.

## NOTE xiii. p. 93.

“The inmost purple spirit of light, and made  
Their peaks transparent.”

Nothing can be more accurate. In certain states of atmosphere, when the sun sinks over those hills in autumn, they change as it were into violet vapour, and seem no less transparent to the eye.

In this poem, *Julian and Maddalo*, Shelley employs, he says, a certain familiar style of language. It is not gracefully or easily employed, nor is the language familiar. In the narrative parts it actually resembles the style of Shelley's novels *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*, and is prosaic beyond anything in Wordsworth.

" My dear friend,  
Said Maddalo, my judgment will not bend  
To your opinion, though I think you might  
Make such a system refutation-tight  
As far as words go."

That is prose, and bad prose, and it does not stand alone.

In the descriptive parts, the poem is, of course, not familiar, but highly imaginative. In the tale of the Madman, its passion lifts it wholly out of the familiar. Excellent indeed as *Julian and Maddalo* is, its note is peculiar and unequal, nor are its elements kindly mixed. And this partly arises from Shelley having put so much of himself into the Madman, that the character is not separated from his own, that is, from Julian's, with sufficient sharpness. Julian and the Madman grow into one another as we read.

#### NOTE xiv. p. 111.

It is interesting to compare with *Mont Blanc*, Letter iv. to Peacock. It contains the germ of many of the images used, and of the thoughts expressed in the poem.

#### NOTE xv. p. 119.

I saw once, from a tower that overlooked two rookeries, this very thing. The moment the sun's disk had fully climbed over the edge of a distant wood, the whole band of rooks, from both their homes, silent before, rose, all the

birds together, with a great "hail" into the air, and hovering together for a second or two, streamed down the wind towards the sun.

NOTE xvi. p. 132.

I have put in this extract from *Rosalind and Helen*, that its feebler work may be compared with Shelley's treatment of the same subject, under the influence of passion, in the *Recollection*.

NOTE xvii. p. 134.

This is the same subject as *The Zucca* of the poems. In this form it occurs in an unfinished drama, and is more in the special manner of Shelley than is the poem itself. The subject, thus twice treated, and alluded to also in the *Witch of Atlas* (p. 210, line 5), grew out of a real incident which is described in one of the Shelley letters.

NOTE xviii. p. 146, lines 15, 16.

This is the second time that Shelley borrows this phrase from Wordsworth; from the *Elegiac Stanzas suggested by a picture of Peele Castle*.

"Whene'er I looked, thy image still was there;  
It trembled, but it never passed away."

NOTE xix. p. 148.

The poems of the preceding section I have called *Poems of Nature and Man*, because in them, as in some others elsewhere placed in this book, Shelley has mixed up Nature with human feeling, chiefly with his own feeling. In some of these poems, which I have called *Poems of pure Nature*, he writes of Nature as his special form of Pantheism, if I may call it that, urged him. He writes of her apart from Man, as the outward image of an all-sustaining, all-pervading Love, whom he embodied in the creation of *Asia*. Nay, he sometimes writes of this Love alone, and seems to forget that there is any image of her in the outward world. She is

when he conceives her best, alive, and has her own separate pleasures and pains. And below her, and deriving life from her, is *Panthea*, the whole of the phenomenal universe. But he writes also in these poems of certain distinct individualities in Nature, without any reference to a spiritual life in which they are contained. The Cloud, the Apennine, the sphere of vapour sucked by the sun from the forest pool, the Moon, the Earth, have each and all their own distinct life, their own living spirit; be, and have, and do of their own will.

NOTE xx. p. 155.

I have left out the last verse of this song to *Asia*, because it is mixed up with the events of the Drama. The song is, in this book, better without it. If *Asia* is the embodiment of that Love by which the universe is, and who, in loving, makes the universe, this song seems to conceive that there is a something behind and greater than this Love; a central source of Being and Power—the *Demogorgon* of the *Prometheus Unbound*. Yet to call Demogorgon the central source of being, would say more, perhaps, than Shelley meant. If he had been asked himself what he meant, he might have replied, I conceive of a vast Perception, and no more. Nevertheless, the Thought and the Song may be compared with Goethe's conception of *the Mothers* in the second part of *Faust*, and of *Faust's* descent to find them.

NOTE xxi. p. 158, 164.

The last stanza is omitted of the Echo Song.

At page 164 the answer of the Earth to the first stanza of the Moon's song to him is omitted, and also the long series of stanzas which follow the Earth's, "It interpenetrates my granite mass," partly because they are mixed up with the ethical end of the Drama, partly because they are, if one may dare to say so, less good than the rest.

I have changed the common punctuation at the end of the line, "Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst," because it seems plain that Shelley meant the Moon to take up

the answering song, and to carry out herself that which the Earth was about to say. In the same way the earth takes up and finishes for the Moon what she was about to say after the lines

“ When the sunset sleeps  
Upon its snow ”—

so that each toss to and fro their thoughts of each other. The concluding lines which follow the verse, “ Through isles for ever calm,” seem to me to spoil, by their fierceness of note, those that precede them. I have, therefore, as one may in selections, been bold enough to leave them out.

NOTE xxii. p. 181.

These few poems which are apart from those on Nature, and on Man, and on Shelley's phases of passion outside his home, are called *Poems of Home Life*, for want of a better title. At page 196, though the Eton remembrances are interesting, the new matter lately discovered is not inserted.

NOTE xxiii. p. 201.

Whom or what Shelley meant by his *Witch of Atlas* is scarcely worth asking. She keeps her own secret. But I have sometimes thought that its germ may be found in the line in *Mont Blanc*—

“ In the still cave of the Witch, Poesy ;”

and her birth from Apollo, and the beasts that come to her as to Orpheus' song, and many other things, fit that Witch.

NOTE xxiv. p. 227.

Shelley translates his title in the line—

“ Whither 'twas fled *this soul out of my soul* ;”

and the word *Epipsychidion* is coined by him to express the idea of that line. It might mean “ something which is placed on a soul,” as if to complete or crown it. Or it might be, and more probably was, intended by Shelley to be

a diminutive of endearment, from *Epipsyche*. There is no such Greek word as ἐπι-ψυχή. But Epipsyche would mean "a soul upon a soul," just as Epicycle, in the Ptolemaic astronomy, meant "a circle upon a circle." Such a "soul on a soul" might be paraphrased as "a soul which is the complement of, or responsive to, another soul," i.e., to the soul of the poet, so that each soul seeks to be united with that other to be in harmony wherewith it has been created. This idea, many suggestions of which may be found in Plato, seems most clearly expressed in the lines near the end of the poem beginning—

"One passion in two hearts."

As in the *Vita Nuova*, Dante writes sometimes of Beatrice herself, and sometimes of the absolute Love and Wisdom whom she represents, and at other times seems to write of both together, as if the earthly and the heavenly passion were wrought into one, so here Shelley (p. 229-33) speaks now of Emilia alone, and now of that Epipsychidion whom he feels through her, and who is veiled in her. The phrases change from being personal and passionate to being impersonal and passionate. The image and the thing imaged are frequently fused into one. Yet in the end, he ascends through Emilia to the "Divinity of the world of his own thoughts." Who that was he describes—"There was a Being whom my spirit oft." It is the Spirit of the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*. "Her spirit was the harmony of truth." Then he describes the search for her, repeating the motive and the story of *Alastor*. In the midst of this we come on that thought, not contained in *Alastor*, which is found in the notes to *Prince Athanase*. He meets "one whose voice is venomous melody." This is the image of sensual Love of Beauty—Aphrodite Pandemos—and the description of this lower love may be compared with that dwelt on in Shakspeare's later sonnets to which Shelley, afterwards speaking of this poem, refers.

Shelley now turns away from his youthful experience in *Alastor* to speak of how he sought to find in mortal women the shadow of that celestial substance of his Epipsychidion.

The one "who was true (p. 237), but not true to him," is Harriet Grove. I conjecture that the "comet, beautiful and fierce," is that woman of whose love for Shelley we have so many hints, and who swept, as it were like a comet, across the orbit of his life in London, Switzerland, and Naples. Mary Godwin is the Moon of the passage. I imagine that the lines which tell of her only speak of the first years of his union with her, and that the "storms which then lashed the ocean of his sleep" image the troubled feelings which we find in the lines written to her in 1814, and the misery he felt on hearing of his wife's death. In that case, "She, the Planet of that hour," who was "quenched," and who is not represented as in any way one of the images of his ideal soul, would be the only allusion to Harriet Westbrook, and one sufficiently obscure not to be unbecoming. The strange thing is that, under the symbolism of the text, Mary Godwin—and here the later experience of his married life enters the poem—is certainly represented as not having sufficiently kindled or warmed his life. When the earthquakes broke up the "death of ice," she, the white Moon, smiled all the while, ignorant as she was at Naples of the passion that then, as is thought, made him dejected. There are other passages in his poems that support the view that though he was happy in his marriage he was not contented. Then Emilia is described, "Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun," in whom at last he finds life. For a short space Shelley mingles together Sun and Moon, bright regents of his life, in alternate sway, and then the Moon and Mary disappear. The rest of the Poem, though it seems especially personal, is not intended to be so. He slips again and again into phrases of personal passion, because of his "error of seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal," but he is always striving, in intention, to speak only of the vision of his youth, of her who is his second soul, the spiritual substance of all his ideals, of all the Knowledge and Love and Beauty and Nature which he perceives. Of this Emilia is only the shadow. And the Ionian Isle and all else are meant to be impalpable; images of an immaterial world. He says

that no keel has ever ploughed the sea-path to the island. It is itself cradled 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea, and is never visited by the scourges that afflict the earth. The passionate description of his life there with Emilia is the description of Shelley at last united to that other far-off half of his being, and the incorporation of the two into one is as ideal as the rest. It is love reaching its perfect aim, but it has clasped its reality so wholly in the immaterial world of pure thought, that he, with that weakness, as he thought it, which unfitted him for continuance in this ethereal region, cannot live in it save for a moment. Earth claims him again.

“Woe is me

The winged words on which my soul would pierce  
Into the heights of Love's rare universe  
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire  
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire.”

(Compare some lines in the last verse of the *Ode to the West Wind*.)

The fault of the poem as an exposition of the Platonic theory of Love, even with Shelley's addition thereto, is perhaps the very root of its excellence as poetry. It is mixed, consciously or unconsciously, with some love for the woman herself, and this love rising through the intellectual imagery and setting it on fire, redeems it from the cold abstractness of the philosophy, and makes it passionate poetry. Yet the passion for Emilia was truly an ideal one. Shelley himself compared it, when it had died in another and less ideal love, to the love of Ixion for the cloud, and he could not look with much pleasure on this poem, its offspring. He had not then enough of love to absorb or to give substance to his ideal philosophy. Of this idealism of love *Epipsychidion* was the last result. He expressed it all in that poem, and finished with it. Whatever love came afterwards was real, for a woman herself, not for her as the shadow of a spiritual substance. “It is a part of me,” said Shelley, speaking of this poem, “which is already dead.” There is not a trace of this



philosophy of Love in the poems written to Mrs. Williams. It is true that the verses, 3, 4, 5, I have already alluded to, in *The Zucca* (1822) of the Poems, were written after *Epipsychidion*, and describe, more clearly than elsewhere, his imagined love. But they are verses that look back to what has been rather than on what is. At their beginning, the past tense, *I loved*, is used, and even when the present tense is used, the things said have the note of the past.

The main motive of the poem is again taken up with different colouring and imagery in the fable, *Una Favola*, which has been published by Mr. Garnet in his *Relics of Shelley*. That *Fable* is dated 1820, but I should conjecture from its peculiar note, and from its being written in Italian, that it was composed after his meeting with Emilia Viviani. At any rate many of its images and expressions are repeated in *Epipsychidion*. The cave where death and life are, and their flight, the obscure forest into which Emilia comes, are both in the *Fable*, and many other things. So, also, he who cares for *Epipsychidion* would do well to read the first canzone of Dante's *Convito*, the last stanza of which is translated by Shelley as an introduction to this poem.

NOTE xxv. p. 248.

“The author has connected many recollections of his visit to Pompeii and Baïæ, with the enthusiasm exerted by the proclamation of a constitutional Government at Naples. This has given a tinge of picturesque and descriptive imagery to the introductory Epodes, which depicture the scenes, and some of the majestic feelings permanently connected with the scene of this animating event.

“‘*The viper’s palsying venom.*’ The viper was the armorial device of the Visconti, tyrants of Milan.”—*Shelley’s Note*.

NOTE xxvi. p. 255.

I have printed this, as also “Life may change, but it may fly not,” at p. 265, without the divisions made by the alternating semichorus.

## NOTE xxvii. p. 262.

This is the close of *Prometheus Unbound*. It has been included in this book, not for the sake of its poetical quality, which is inferior to other passages in the Drama which might have been inserted, but for its importance as a declaration, not only of what Shelley thought Man would become, but also of how he thought Man should act now in order to arrive at the Golden Age. The two last verses embody the main motives of the *Revolt of Islam*.

## NOTE xxviii. p. 266.

The *Sensitive Plant* is inserted in this place as an introduction to the love poems which belong to Mrs. Williams, because Shelley said that Mrs. Williams was the exact antitype of the lady depicted in it. The *Sensitive Plant* is, of course, Shelley himself, "companionless," as he makes himself in *Adonais*, "desiring what it has not, the beautiful."

## NOTE xxix. p. 282.

"Wild wind, when sullen cloud  
Knells all the night long."

We may compare in order to explain the term—

"As the last cloud of an expiring storm  
Whose thunder is its knell." (*Adonais*.)

"Bare woods, whose branches stain" must be *strain*, as many have conjectured. All the things spoken of are sounding. The wind moans, the cloud knells, the caves and sea wail, and there are few sounds so in tune with the tempest of this poem as the groaning of branches straining in a storm.

## NOTE xxx. p. 289.

I have left out the lines which, however interesting personally, are out of harmony with the rest of the poem.

## NOTE xxxi. p. 290.

The four lines omitted by Shelley in the *Recollection* deserve insertion here.

“ Were not the crocuses that grew  
Under the ilex tree  
As beautiful in scent and hue  
As ever fed the bee?”

## NOTE xxxii. p. 296.

The Greek motto is translated elsewhere by Shelley.

“ Thou wert the morning star among the living,  
Ere thy fair light had fled ;  
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving  
New splendour to the dead.”

## NOTE xxxiii. p. 307, 308.

The *Pilgrim of Eternity* is Byron. *Ierne* is Ireland, and her *lyrist*, Moore.

No analysis of Shelley's nature can excel or equal the self-description of the three verses of p. 308. Leigh Hunt is the last of the mountain shepherds alluded to, p. 309.

The lines—

“ And his own thoughts, along that rugged way  
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.”

are Shelley's reminiscence of two lines in a poem of Wordsworth's.

“ And his own mind did like a tempest strong  
Come to him thus, and drove the weary wight along.”

It is interesting to compare them. They speak volumes of both poets.

## NOTE xxxiv. p. 313.

“ And flowery weeds and fragrant copses dress  
The bones of Desolation’s nakedness.”

Nothing but the bones are there now ; and what have we gained ?

## NOTE xxxv. p. 317.

“ This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset, with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cis-alpine regions

“ The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds that announce it.”—*Shelley’s Note.*

It is characteristic of Shelley’s pleasure in repeating an image or a thought that pleased him, that he makes use of this “phenomenon” at least three times in different poems.

## NOTE xxxvi. p. 296.

The lines from Moschus with which Shelley prefaced the *Adonais* were accidentally omitted in the text. I insert them here, with a translation made of them by Professor Mahaffy.

Φάρμακον ἦλθε Βίων ποτὶ σὸν στόμα φαρμακοειδές.  
πῶς τευ τοῖς χείλεσσι ποτέδραμε κ’οὐκ ἐγλυκάνθη ;  
τίς·δὲ βροτός, τοσσούτον ἀνάμερος ὥς κεράσαι τοι  
ἦ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον, οὐ φύγεν ὤδάν ;

Bion, a potion came to thy mouth which soothed like a potion.  
How did it touch thy lips and not change its bitter to sweetness  
Who so savage of men as to mix or to give thee the poison  
Even as thou didst speak ? Fled he not from the voice of  
thy singing ?

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